

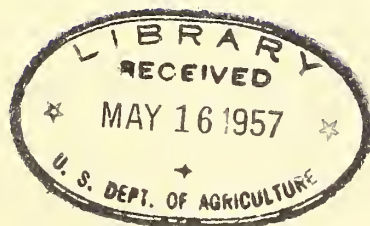
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Writing

Better

Reports



**■ Highlights of a
Report Writing Workshop
June 12-14, 1956**

**Farmer Cooperative Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture**

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The Why and the What of This Workshop

The opening statement of Joseph G. Knapp, Administrator, at the Report Writing Workshop of Farmer Cooperative Service on June 12-14, 1956, set the stage for the first such workshop held by FCS. He said, "We're dealing here with the most important subject that we have to concern ourselves with in the Farmer Cooperative Service. We're dealing with our own character; we're dealing with our own organization; we're dealing with the manufacture of the product that we are designed to produce and serve."

Thus for the professional staff of FCS the job of report writing stands of equal stature with being competent in agricultural economics, business administration, and farmer cooperative opera-

tions and principles, and knowing how to establish good relations with people in the farmer cooperative field.

To refresh ourselves on what goes into good report writing, we held the 3-day workshop reported on in this publication.

First we wanted to refocus with a sharper eye on those points we had learned over the years. Then we wanted to do a little sharp tuning in on what other competent report writers were doing. And finally we wanted to see what might be new in this job -- see if we should unlearn some of our old habits and shift to new channels to more clearly present our work.

All writers sooner or later hear this -- "The art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat



The job of report writing in the Farmer Cooperative Service is an important one. Beryle Stanton, Director, Information Division, FCS stands before a display of the various types of publications it issued in 1956.

of the chair." But even in that posture, any report writer finds he needs to know more than how to sit down and pick up a pencil, however essential that first movement is.

Mr. Knapp appointed a committee to plan a workshop that could help us improve our reports. This committee consisted of Kelsey B. Gardner, director, management services division; Donald E. Hirsch, chief, dairy branch; Ira Stevens, livestock and wool branch; and Beryle Stanton, director, information division. H. M. Mileham and L. Erhardt of the Office of Information of the U. S. Department of Agriculture also sat in on many of our planning sessions and made many valuable suggestions.

When the program was completed, the committee had lined up some 22 experienced workers in the report writing field -- some from government and others from outside agencies doing somewhat similar reports. For 3 days, then, the FCS staff was hard at it, drawing on the knowledge these people had dredged out over many years.

The first morning we turned to first things -- how to plan and organize a publication, how our reports fitted into USDA publication program, and some overall editing policies of FCS.

That afternoon we called in our "Market", asking the users of our publications to tell us how good our marksmanship had been and to make suggestions for better aim in the future. We heard from men in the cooperatives, our first and foremost

market, and from men speaking for educational agencies, Extension service, and the Farm Credit Administration.

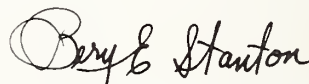
The second morning we got down to the vital spade work needed to lift a report into a workable mass, asking various editors to discuss the parts of a manuscript and how they can be shaped together into a clear, coherent and effective structure.

The second afternoon we turned to the actual writing, the art of getting words down on paper so effectively that readers know precisely what we mean and interestingly enough that they will read what we have labored over. Intertwined with this was the overall theme of how a writer could evaluate his own manuscript.

The third morning we divided up into six smaller groups to begin to apply what we'd learned. Here we first tried to simplify and clarify some horrible examples of writing. We then took some raw matter and began to mold an outline for a report.

The final session on the third afternoon received reports and then discussed the morning work groups. Mr. Knapp then opened up the meeting for broader discussion on all matters considered by the workshop.

A complete copy of the program immediately follows. The succeeding pages highlight what was said and done.



*Director, Information Division
Farmer Cooperative Service*

Report Writing Workshop
Farmer Cooperative Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture

June 12, 13, and 14, 1956

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Participants in Workshop

Joseph G. Knapp, Administrator, Farmer Cooperative Service, USDA
R. L. Webster, Director, Office of Information, USDA
Harry P. Mileham, Office of Information, USDA
Beryle Stanton, Director, Information Division, Farmer Cooperative Service, USDA
J. K. Samuels, Director, Marketing Division, Farmer Cooperative Service, USDA
D. E. Hirsch, Chief, Dairy Branch, Farmer Cooperative Service, USDA
Homer Brinkley, Executive Vice President, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
J. K. Stern, President, American Institute of Cooperation
W. G. Hoag, Research and Information Division, Farm Credit Administration
L. J. Noordhoff, Information Programs, Extension Service, USDA
D. F. Hall, Agricultural Research Service, USDA
M. A. Abrahamsen, Director, Purchasing Division, Farmer Cooperative Service, USDA
Leslie Erhardt, Office of Information, USDA
Forest Hall, Marketing Information Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA
Evelyn Breck, Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C.
John R. Riggleman, Federal Trade Commission
Elmo White, Office of Information, USDA
K. B. Gardner, Director, Management Services Division, Farmer Cooperative Service, USDA
Val Sherman, National Milk Producers Federation, Washington, D. C.
Hilary Milton, Presentation Support Division, Office, Secretary of Air Staff
Ruth Nordin, Information Division, Soil Conservation Service, USDA
Amy Cowing, Federal Extension Service, USDA
Alice Nelson, Chief, Publications Branch, Foreign Agriculture Service
Jerome H. Perlmutter, Office of Information, USDA

Session I



Planning Research *with* **Publications in Mind**

Joseph G. Knapp, *Chairman.*

Importance of Organization of Research for a Publication

3

Joseph G. Knapp,

Administrator,

Farmer Cooperative Service, U.S.D.A.

No matter how good the writing of a report, you can't cover up poor organization of inadequate data.

Any great work of art--in poetry, prose, or painting--represents good work from the time the conception took hold in the mind of the author or artist.

A great reputation for a research institution will not be built upon gimmicks of expression or popularization. I have nothing against the use of gimmicks or popularization but they are the sizzle on the steak or the frosting on the cake rather than the thing itself.

One of our biggest problems in FCS will always be to find the right problems for study. A problem must be worth solving if it is to be worth reporting.

We must have a logical plan in the organization of our research if we are going to have a logical report when we are through. Now, what do we mean by a logical plan? I think we mean where each step fits together logically.

I believe it is important in a talk like this to stress the importance of outlines or structural thinking. I look upon an outline as a working tool rather than a permanent blueprint. The material that goes into a report grows as the research is conducted. As we gain additional insights we can improve on the character of the report. I like to think of most outlines for reports as provisional. It is the finished product that we are interested in, in preparing reports, not the

machinery of report preparation. It's what it takes to get there that's important.

We can, however, take certain ideas for granted. Any kind of study should start off with a statement of the problem and by this I mean we must have an understanding of the background to make the problem and the importance of the situation clear. For example, let us compare the preparation of a report with the writing of a detective story. There is a certain formula in writing detective stories which has stood the test of decades. Somewhat the same thing is



Display of some of the publications issued by Farmer Cooperative Service at its most recent annual program workshop. Mr. Knapp, lead-off speaker of the Report Writing Workshop, talks with Jas. L. Robinson of Extension Service at the left.

true for research reports of various kinds. In a detective story we must find the methods to solve the problem. We must show enough of the methodology to

build confidence in the researcher and the results, the same way that a detective story must build up confidence in Sherlock Holmes--or whoever the detective is. Then we come up with the findings. To my mind, the findings should grow normally and logically out of the preceding analysis of problems. The final conclusions of a report should be in the nature of a synthesis which brings to bear all of the knowledge that has been learned in making the report.

Then there is the question of exploration--how we conceive of a problem. It seems to me that if we can get the major elements of a problem before us then we can develop parts or thought heads for the study and we can then gather data that will bear on these particular phases of the work to be done.

I do not recommend writing a report all at once. It doesn't seem to me logical to gather all the data and then sit down or climb a mountain top to write the report. My experience is that as you try to write up material you will see gaps and you will need more data. Sometimes it's a good idea to start writing before you have much data because this will bring home to you the importance of the weakness in your presentation without data.

Bibliographies Often a Short Cut

I also wish to stress the importance in the process of research of bibliographies. Bibliographies, developed in the course of a research job, help us get ideas on method. It is not enough to just have a bibliography. One should look at the materials covered by the bibliography which may pertain to the problem at hand. A bibliography is a way of helping us get short cuts because others may have done part of the work that we would otherwise do if it were not reported in published materials.

It seems to me that in a talk like this we should also stress the importance of scheduling work and having something in the way of a time-sense as we carry it on. I believe we should complete parts of a project according to some time plan but in this process we should allow adequate time for the job. I have often

noticed how people underestimate the time that they think it will take to do something. The main thing is they have a weak conception of what it takes to do a job. As experience is gained, a research worker can pretty well decide how much time it will take to do a certain kind of job.

It is my experience that planning is one of the weakest elements of research and that the final report often shows the lack of initial planning. You can't take a job that has been inadequately planned and make a good report out of it. If you have plenty of good material, however, even though there are difficulties in whipping it into shape, you have something to work with.

Another thing that I feel very keenly on is that organization of a manuscript should not come in the editing process.

Planning of a report is, or should be, to my mind, a function of the professional worker. Sometimes members of staff say, "Well, the editors want it this way." How do you know? These authors are setting up a straw man in their minds -- a conception of what the editor wants. Chances are that the editor doesn't want it at all the way they think the editor wants it. Let's don't undersell the editor. The author has a style to develop, and a report should reflect the quality of the research worker. Our institutional style should respect variety rather than impose uniformity.

Hermit Complex to Be Avoided

Another thing that I have noticed is that a lot of people have what I call the hermit complex in connection with research. They refuse to counsel with others. This kind of man wants to spring a masterpiece. He doesn't want any help. He wants full appreciation for the wonders of his thought. I know a number of very sad cases where men did an enormous amount of work but the wrong work because they did not take others into consideration in helping them plan. Let's take a reasonable approach.

I believe in what you might call prenatal care of manuscripts. A healthy baby is the product of prenatal care. So

is a healthy report. I believe that we should try to write more than an acceptable report, that we should have a standard that is our own. In writing reports, what are your standards? Don't kid yourself -- you will never be a good research person unless you read as well as write. You must know the literature of

job. We must delineate the subject and keep fairly close to the subject. It's hard to give too much advice on this because, as Dr. Bomberger used to say, "We must be broad but not too broad."

There is great danger of getting too much unnecessary detail, to collect so much data that we get all balled up in it.



Report writers need to think who they are writing for even in the planning stages of a manuscript. Here a group attending an American Institute of Cooperation meeting look at an FCS publication.

your subject, and I mean by literature the best writing available. How deep is your reading? Are you content only with the most obvious related matter?

A great many research workers also have the magnum opus complex. They are concerned with writing a masterpiece. They want to show the world that no one else could have done half as good a job. This attitude is commendable if not carried too far.

Must Have Pencil Control

One of the real problems in the organization of research is the danger of proliferation. When we get into any subject there is the problem of control. There are so many byways that we can stray into. Whether we like it or not we must be discriminatory. We must make choices as we go along in any research

I know a number of studies where the data-gathering resulted in such a world of data that the research worker was almost driven crazy and the only way to extricate him from the problem was to start all over again -- throw out most of the data that had been gathered. Too many people have the idea that you gather all the data, then you take a weekend and write it up. You talk with them and they say, "I'm about through with the job. I've got most of my data collected." Then a little bit later you find them frustrated trying to figure out what to do with the data.

One of the perplexing problems we have is not to undertake to do too big a job to get the results you need. How much data do you really need? If a study of ten associations will give you the desired information, why study a hundred? We sometimes hear of old prizefighters getting punch drunk. I've known of a lot

of research workers that got data-drunk.

Another thing we should keep in mind in writing reports is that everything is tentative until the job is ready to be submitted. Flexibility must be maintained as long as there is an opportunity to improve a report.

What is Point of Diminishing Return?

We must ask ourselves -- what is the price of quality? It's the same problem that a farm supply firm has that handles feed. Just how much attention should be given to building quality in feed or fertilizer? You come to a point of diminishing returns when the added increment of attention does not result in an equal value of quality improvement. Can we afford a month or two to make perfect a document that will more or less do the job as it stands? These are all problems that call for discrimination and judgment, and research workers should develop this kind of capacity. Above all, I don't want you to get the idea I'm not for quality. In many cases I'm for going that last mile to get it, but let's know what we are doing when we lavish time in order to improve the product. In a way, we are in the manufacturing business.

I think one of the problems that we have is that oftentimes we don't break jobs down into pieces. We try to do a complete study of something which could be just as well done in five sub-projects. This way we would keep the data fresher and then as we worked along we could

improve in our thinking, and when we finally come to the preparation of the report for the record we would be able to have the judgment of those who have used the preliminary reports on the sub-project. My old friend, Dr. Carl Alsberg, used to say that one of the great crimes of the social scientists was that they did not appreciate the importance of studying pieces of projects. In the natural sciences workers are more willing to take a piece of a job and work on it, and then leave to later the synthesis of their ideas.

How long should a report be? We hear a lot about short reports. I am all for them. However, an interesting report can be longer than a dull one, and a long report is not, however, always an interesting one. A short report may be helpful but inadequate - like a cup of coffee and a doughnut. If a problem is important it is worthy of adequate presentation.

Another thing, don't strive for ultimate perfection. Ninety-eight percent should be good enough.

Yet, I would like to emphasize that we should try to do more than write an acceptable report. Anyway, when we write an acceptable report -- who is it acceptable to? What is your standard? If you model your work on that of someone else, be sure to take the best.

Who are you writing for? Be candid with yourself. Are you writing for yourself, college professors, your wife, managers, farmers, intelligensia, morons?

This discourse was designed to open the pores of discussion and set a frame for the talks to follow.

Overall U S D A Publication Aims

R. Lyle Webster,

Director of Information, U.S.D.A.

One thing about the publications and the work of the Farmer Cooperative Service interests me very much ... the service idea. Under this concept the man who does the research, and writes the publication, also goes out and does a good deal of consulting with the people who are interested in that information.

This is a somewhat different practice than that followed by authors of most of the publications issued by other Department agencies. Theoretically, this should make the FCS publications extremely useful. If you are going to have to use the publications in your advisory work, then you're more likely to see that they are tailored for that job. I assume, then, that your publications are useful working tools for you.

Who Uses Our Publications?

We have to think all the time about what happens to a publication when it comes out. Who sees it? Who uses it? You're going to discuss the different publications markets this afternoon -- the educational market, the Extension market, the cooperative market, and so on. I'm wondering if you have even a broader market -- if many people outside the defined fields might not have some interest in your publications. Perhaps we need a farmer's bulletin on cooperatives.

Dr. Knapp used the phrase, "What the editor wants." That, of course, is one of our publication problems and perhaps workshops like this are one way of helping solve it. He also spoke of "pre-

natal care." That moves me to define the function of editorial people.

Often a man will write a manuscript and work on it for a year or so. He thinks it's just about right. So he takes it to the editor. Then the editor wants to do something else. Well, we think the editor should be a sort of obstetrician. He shouldn't be trying to kill this baby of yours, but just trying to get it born.



Mr. Webster suggested possibility of a farmer's bulletin on cooperatives for the broader market of the farmer-reader.

Department wide, we have some special publication responsibilities. FCS is much in tune with the times in holding a workshop. Economists in the last few years have held about four regional workshops at land grant colleges, with USDA personnel helping out on these. Last fall we had a series of sessions with authors in the Agricultural Marketing Service. Today again we are dealing in the field of economic writing.

The Department itself is going through an intensive program of improving all its publications work. When Secretary Benson came into office in 1953, one of his early concerns was with the publish-

ing that the Department was doing. He called me in his office one day and he had a stack of publications reaching toward the ceiling. He asked, "Do these publications have to be this long?"

That, of course, was just the starting point. As a result of the Secretary's sincere concern, he set up the Department Publications Review Committee to take an intense look at its publications. He asked that each agency appoint its own Publications Committee and said in effect, "Let's plan these publications, let's do our discussing of them before they reach this big manuscript stage, because at that point you obviously aren't going to do much more than go ahead and print them."

Department Committee Report

You have probably seen the report issued by the overall Department Publications Review Committee. We consider this report the most comprehensive review ever made of USDA publications work. It contains 55 separate recommendations that will take 100 different actions to make effective. It will take years to implement it all. It goes all the way from administration, to planning, to preparation, and on through distribution.

Probably the recommendation that touches us here today is one that says increasing emphasis be placed on brevity, readability and preciseness; that publications meet standards of readability, layout and format as determined by Office of Information or agency editorial personnel to insure a maximum of effectiveness.

All this work is a team job. It has to be because of our volume. This Department last year published over 400 different new publications. That's more than one a day. We currently stock about 600 different so-called popular publications. Just keeping these 600 publications up to date is a tremendous headache. They represent a body of information that people use to get answers to questions or problems.

This tremendous volume makes teamwork most important. It's a job not only for the man who writes the manuscript,

but for the editor, the artist, the photographer, the layout man, and the person who deals with distribution. Incidentally, this distribution may be the last link in the operation, but in many cases it is the most important one.

The road a publication has to go through in this Department is long. A man writes a publication and it eventually goes to his agency information office. Then that office routes it to the central USDA information office which moves it along to the printing office. You can't avoid any of this process.

But you can go along and put oil on trouble spots. Advance planning can help smooth out the path beforehand also. Then when a manuscript gets to the editorial office, instead of being the subject of a 3-month discussion and memorandum writing duel, it goes smoothly on its way to the printer.

This is the U.S.D.A. publications office aim -- teamwork so we can expedite the material and at the same time get it up to some reasonable standards. From this Workshop we hope we can get ideas and material such as we are getting from other workshops to set up some guides and helps. Then when a man comes up to the time he is ready to write his report, we can have some sort of a manual to give him some useable aids -- and thereby shorten this process that bothers all of us.

Editors Want to Be Helps

We'd want every one who's going to write a report to know that such a manual is available, to look on this material and on editors as people who will help get a job done. I think unhappily too often editors appear as hurdles. We don't want to be hurdles, we want to be helps.

Ideally, a man as he organizes his project would consult with the editor, he'd say what kind of pictures he's going to need, and he'd make sure that he picked up his illustrations as the study was being made.

I think this workshop can help this desired teamwork. We in the Office of Information certainly want to do all we can to help you along the way.

Publishing in the Department of Agriculture

Harry P. Mileham,
Chief of Publications
Office of Information, U.S.D.A.

Publishing in the Department is a major undertaking. It ranges from small folders to books, and from the most popular, easy-to-read bulletins to highly technical primary reports of research. It includes hundreds of processed publications.

The Division of Publications of the Office of Information is the central publishing agency of the Department and its work, in a sense, is comparable to that of a commercial publishing house. The Division receives manuscripts from a variety of sources, handles and publishes them (with the work done at several printing plants through the Government Printing Office), and promotes and distributes the publications.

Publishing may be compared to a manufacturing process, using modern skills and facilities and machinery. But instead of a new model once a year, each job is a special problem and a new model in itself.

Size and Nature of Operation

The Department puts out more than 400 new printed publications a year plus 170 separate issues of major printed periodicals in a year, averaging about 300,000 copies a month. Costs of new printed publications run to more than \$800,000 a year. More than 250 publications are reprinted in a year at a cost of well over \$200,000.

The Editorial Section is the nerve center of the Division of Publications. It not only clears the manuscripts for policy; it also guides the manuscripts from the

time each is received until it is finally packaged up for the printer. Once a manuscript is received, in addition to being read and reviewed, it generally has to be routed to the Art and Graphics Division; it has to be checked with the Agency both as to suggested changes in content and as to the art work; it has to be checked with the Inquiries and Distribution Service; and it has to be checked as to its preparation for the printer.

Hundreds of Thousands of Requests Yearly

The Inquiries and Distribution Service handles hundreds of thousands of requests for publications and information that come to the Department each year. This year it received a superior service award from the Department for its commendable service.

The Congressional Inquiries Unit serves the Members of Congress, supplies 6 to 10 million lists each year for forwarding to constituents, and provides more than 5 million free copies of publications to Members of Congress each year for their constituents.

The Telephone and In-Person Information Unit handles the telephone requests except those from Members of Congress. These requests run almost 60,000 in a 12-month period in addition to nearly 20,000 personal inquiries.

The Government and Public Inquiries Unit takes care of letter requests from the public and Government Agencies, whether Federal, State, foreign, county, or city. The annual total of requests in round figures approaches 400,000 a year.

The Mailing List Unit maintains a master index for the Department of almost 400,000 names and more than 1,100 mailing lists. This unit completes

the distribution plan for each new publication.

The Printing Section of the Division of Publications handles 3,500 orders for printing within a year, involving \$2 million or more. This includes job printing, such as forms, as well as the printing of publications. A "guesstimate" of the total would exceed 1 billion.

Manuscript Handling and Clearance

Under the Secretary's memorandum No. 1348 the responsibility for the detailed editing of manuscripts rests with the agencies. Policy clearance and control rest with the Office of Information. Substantive policy is one part of the policy clearance activity. Manuscripts must conform to, must further, and must not conflict with the Department's policies, such as policies on prices, or low-income farming, or cooperatives.

We are concerned also with the clearance of manuscripts with other agencies of the Department and with other Departments of the Government.

We are concerned with the series into which a publication goes. We look to see that the name of the U. S. Department of Agriculture is on the cover, that the publication is dated, that design, illustration, and printing matters are properly handled.

We are concerned with good practice in a number of other ways, in accurate presentation of information, in the use of summaries, in economical length, in the handling of photographs, color, and the like.

Our job is to represent the Department in looking at each manuscript. Our job is to look at it not as a manuscript, and not just as parts of a manuscript (cover, contents, preface, text, legends, credits, illustrations, or summary). We need to visualize in our minds how this will look in its final, printed form -- how it will look and serve as an official representative of the United States Department of Agriculture as it enters the homes of, sometimes, hundreds of thousands of American families. That's why we are concerned with: what is said; to whom it is said; how the reader will use

it; how the material is presented; how the product will be manufactured and with what priority and speed.

We are interested in working with you toward the goal of understandable writing. We feel that research doesn't have to be written so that no one can understand it.



USDA publications enter the homes of hundreds of thousands of American families.

We are very much interested in working closely with the information units of the agencies. You in FCS are one of the smaller agencies of the Department, but you have a very well-equipped editorial unit.

It is always a good idea when you are planning a publication to turn to the information people, to an editor. I am sure that information people do not have all the pat answers. But what is important for you is that the editors and your information people generally are there to help you. I hope you will turn to them.

In a sense Mrs. Stanton is a liaison between subject matter people in FCS and us. We work very closely with Mrs. Stanton. We are always glad to sit down with her and work out problems.

What We Look for in FCS Editing

Beryle Stanton,

Director, Information Division

Farmer Cooperative Service, U.S.D.A.

We people in the Information Division are here to learn right along with the authors. We hope this Report Writing Workshop will help get all our mutual aims into a little clearer focus.

In general, we hope to refresh ourselves on some of the things we've known all along ... even though some of them may have slipped down into one of the closed-up niches of our minds. We hope this fishing expedition we plan here will pull some of them out into the open again.

My specific topic is -- What We Look For in FCS Editing. That would necessarily overlap many of the things others will be telling you. But I'll try to hit the high spots on a few points that might apply only to FCS publications.

Let's Think of Editors as Conduits

I'm sure all authors at times feel an editing shop is the barrier to getting their publications out to the public. I suppose that's true because certainly our job is to help the Administrator and the Program Division Directors decide whether to "Open the Door Richard," for them -- or to turn them around and head them back to the study stillborn.

But we hate to be classed as impediments -- so let's try to think of editors as something more constructive. Homer Brinkley, executive vice president, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, called our agency a conduit to get help to cooperatives. Perhaps I can adapt that phrase and class editors as conduits

to help authors get to their public ... a part of that long transmission belt from the economist out to the co-op, the college or extension worker, or whoever we're trying to reach.

Editors are the first to admit that we have to play each manuscript a little differently. Each has a personality and a purpose of its own. We do try to follow some general rules but that's a little like this business of raising kids -- they all have to be handled differently. And also like kids -- the care and feeding of a manuscript can sometimes be a 24-hour a day job for the author-editor team, with it preying on our minds into the night until it's in final shape.

The Three-A Checkup

I personally start out with what I call a 3A checkup when I go to work on a manuscript. These 3 A's -- Adequate, Accurate, and finally Arresting.

Most authors won't quarrel with the first two, sometimes they do with the last. But in the tugging for time that goes on with all of us, I'm firmly convinced that in most cases we don't have a captive audience waiting for our materials. We've got to get out and capture them with our publications. That means putting some of the peak ideas where the reader can see them easily and then filling up the valleys with supporting material.

There's a fourth major point we look for. And by straining a bit we can fit it into the A's category to make a 4 A classification. That is Audience Reaction. Words are most peculiar gadgets of communication -- what we say and what we mean often don't jibe. And what

we say and what the reader thinks we said are sometimes far removed also.

So we try to put ourselves into somebody else's shoes, someone who may not know as much about co-ops as we do. In other words, we try to be your guinea pig reactors--saying just how would a man who may not understand co-ops react to this; can someone misuse this in some way to defeat the good purpose of the publication? Of course, some people can take any sentence and any idea out of context and twist it to their own purpose. Certainly, however, we shouldn't be fashioning their tools for them. But it's a far wider audience that may simply misunderstand what we say.

We go on the basis that the straightforward, positive approach to the subject is usually the best. As I told one of the authors when we were fussing a bit about taking out what I thought might be construed as an attack on someone, I believe we'll get better results by preaching the glories of heaven than by warning about the fires of Hades.

More Subtle Approach Usually Better

That poses another warning. I don't think a government publication could do much worse than preach at its readers. Americans quite naturally resent some all-powerful fount of Government knowledge spouting forth to them in positive directions on what they should do. So we usually try to present the idea somewhat more subtly by showing what a good job Joe Co-op may be doing and getting across what you wanted in the first place.

Sometimes we find statements that play up one co-op or one kind of co-op over another. We certainly don't want to get the co-ops into a hairpulling match, with us in the middle. So we watch out for that.

And sometimes we claim too much -- "it's the biggest," "it's the best." We better be sure we can back up statements like that or we'll have to back up.

One other thing we editors in the Information Division check on about the first thing -- to see if that word co-op is in the first few paragraphs. The only reason we have for existence is our work

with cooperatives. So we certainly shouldn't hide that word co-op under a bushel of pages.

The FCS Information Division also sets up another "guinea pigger" on manuscripts, one you've probably heard from us far too many times ... "If we can't understand it, maybe your readers can't." I know editors have stupid days, and I'll even concede you occasionally find a stupid editor -- but the same goes for co-op readers too. If it takes us 15 minutes to figure out a sentence there's a good chance something is wrong with the way it's said as well as with us.

We try not to either overestimate or underestimate our reader's intelligence -- a nice goal if we could always hit it. But simple, factual writing is the best try at it.

Simplification reminds me of the story about the illiterate truck driver who was making up a bill. He finally came up with this -- "\$3 for 3 comes and 3 goes at 4 bits a went."

At least - you got what he was driving at. He was also economical with words, and you didn't have to get an accountant or a lawyer to translate.

So that brings me to another point. It you'd cut out the excess words -- the engaged in's, the the's, in connection with's, in the state of's, and the like -- we might be able to print a few more publications a year on our budget. So the editors usually get out their word paring knives and go to work phrase by phrase.

Sentences Shrinking, Words Expanding

I heard a professor of journalism at the University of Missouri talk to the co-op editors' workshop there in the spring about simple writing. He made the point that each century our sentences keep shortening -- that we are in a period now of shrinking sentences and expanding words. He also cited the Bible as the best example of simple and beautiful writing and reasoned this was because it was put down as it was talked in those days. He went on to say that our good writing is now getting much closer to the way we talk.



Co-op truck driver probably won't be interested in highly technical economic writing -- often a guide to go by in choice of words and approach.

Most editors have a set of what I call "Watch Words." There are certain words in any field that people grow accustomed to using on each other. An economist talks to a fellow economist and they understand each other ... most of the time I'd guess anyway. Probably editors do likewise. But sometimes the manager of a small grain elevator or a co-op truck driver might not understand our more technical language.

So we have to think about who is going to be reading this publication in deciding whether some words stay or go.

There are other words that are real "Fighting Words" to some readers. So we try to snatch those out also as they go by our desks. Of course, what's a watchword one place may not be another.

The editors want you to look good. Sometimes you forget about pictures and perhaps even the charts until the last moment. Deadlines must be met in the publications business. Not only do good illustrations take time, they should be given time. I've seen the day when one

of us in the information office put on our running shoes after all else had failed and dashed around scavenging other people's files to come up with the best last-minute choice we could for a publication.

Many of you do think about illustrations as you're doing the field work and writing the manuscript. I'm just reminding that we need considerable time to make charts, design covers, and crop pictures. So give us enough advance notice to dress up your publications.

I suppose the final test for any publication would be this one -- How can it be made most useful? In our case this means to the farmers who own the co-ops for whom we work. So we think about that too as we go through a manuscript.

This is some of what we have in the backs of our minds when we go to work on you and your manuscripts. This workshop should bring out many others. For we've assembled on this program quite a large collective editorial brain. Here's your chance to pick it.

Points Discussed

This first morning's session saw discussions revolving around several points.

Among them was how far FCS should go in presenting conclusions and recommendations in reporting on its studies. John Scanlan thought we should present definite recommendations. John Heckman remarked that under the Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926 -- the one authorizing FCS work -- the Service has a definite responsibility to go farther perhaps than some agencies in presenting conclusions and recommendations. Mr. Knapp remarked this is probably true of most USDA reports. Along this line, M. A. Abrahamsen asked if we always evaluate alternatives, that there may be more than one answer to a problem.

Mr. Knapp mentioned that many a memo is often written in working out some problems between author, editors, and other clearance channels -- and in a somewhat jocular vein, remarked that some of our best writing often goes into these memos.

In the discussion, Mr. Webster wondered about the possibility of broadening the audience of some FCS publications, mentioning in particular the possibilities of a farmers' bulletin on cooperatives. He said he realized FCS had a direct cooperative focus on most of its publications.

Mr. Knapp stated that FCS had the object of developing information of value to many types of firms. In particular its work under the Agricultural Marketing Act funds covered others than cooperatives.

After Mr. Mileham's talk in which he explained USDA publications and their clearance policy, Mr. Knapp added that it was important to recognize that policy clearance is a flexible idea. He said we need some "kitchen testing" to try out our ideas on various people, that others often don't see what we are trying to say.

H. J. Preston raised a point about audience -- that if some publications are too simplified they may be aimed for too wide an audience. He stressed that there is need for some rather complex reports where the problems dealt with are complex. He suggested we should strive for a selected type of audience in some cases.

Mrs. Stanton remarked that a recent study of a co-op's membership showed the majority of its members with 8th grade education or less. She felt that our publications should take this into account.

Mr. Knapp remarked that quite well-educated people can have little formal education.

Job Savage asked what do we really know about whom we are writing for. Mr. Mileham told about a proposed USDA study on audience and use of its publications to begin to find the answer to part of this question.

Mr. Knapp stated that one of our best ways of gauging audience reaction to our publications comes from the letters we receive on them.

Writing for Our Audience



Session II

J. K. Samuels, *Chairman*

Who Each FCS Series Is For

Donald E. Hirsch,
Farmer Cooperative Service, U.S.D.A.

The Farmer Cooperative Service has a number of different types of publications ... with different series naturally directed toward different audiences.

Let's look at the display of all types of FCS publications shown here at this workshop to help describe the purpose and place of each series.

Bulletin -- May be either technical or a basic report on cooperation. Bulletin 1, *Farmer Cooperatives in the United States*, is an example of a basic report of long term value for a wide audience. The technical reports in this series may be directed toward researchers to a greater degree than other reports for general distribution. Presentation is then rather formal.

Circular -- A report to anyone interested in the findings of a research study but directed primarily toward cooperative management and students of cooperation. The emphasis is on readability and attractive appearance, with findings of general interest and long-term value.

Educational Circular -- Directed primarily toward members of cooperatives and college and vocational agriculture students and their teachers. Contains educational information with wide-spread interest and long-term value.

General Report -- Distribution and information similar to circular generally, but less extensive. Information published in this series if it's desirable to publish results quickly, the nature of the findings is preliminary, the period of usefulness

of the results is shorter than for bulletins or circulars, and the distribution is in smaller quantity.

Educational Aid -- Reports and other material -- including suggestions for slides and flannelgraphs -- designed specifically for training or demonstration use by Extension service personnel and other educators working with 4-H clubs, vocational agriculture students and adult education groups. Generally presents information compiled for a particular educational purpose rather than direct findings of specific research studies.

Information -- A brief publication -- often in leaflet form -- using written text, pictures or drawings to present the highlights of a bulletin, circular, speech, or article, or to make available other information of general or special interest. Prepared in popular style for wide-spread distribution.

Service Report -- May be (1) progress reports for review by cooperating agencies or others on work accomplished under research projects, or (2) special statements to meet certain urgent needs. Make only an initial distribution to selected audience except as individual copies may be made available later to a few interested individuals who have specific need for it.

Special Case Study -- An advisory report to directors and administrative employees of one or more existing cooperatives, or to a group contemplating formation of a cooperative. Contains findings after a study of operations of a specific cooperative or group of such cooperatives.

The Cooperative Market

W. G. Wyso,
Management Consultant
Southern States Cooperative
Richmond, Virginia

The use of the term "market" in connection with the four major markets for FCS publications is down to earth and realistic.

It conveys the impression, and I'm sure intentionally, that you have something to sell. You've got ideas, information, research, experience and know-how to sell in your writing and publications.

But your effectiveness in selling depends on the sort of writing you do -- its clarity, its effectiveness, its understandability as well as how it's presented in print and whether or not it's interesting and attractive.

I think I can illustrate my point here with a personal experience. I have now been with the Southern States Cooperative for 33 years. For 2 or 3 years before that, I was an Extension Agronomist with a college. In that capacity I had a hand in writing some bulletins. One that I have particular reference to had to do with the importance of the origin of clover and alfalfa seed. At that time about half this seed used on the Atlantic Seaboard was imported and practically worthless.

My college had conducted some research and developed the fact that this imported seed yielded farmers less than half the hay crop from adapted domestic seed. So I concocted a bulletin on that subject, one published by the college in the usual stereotyped way -- title only on the front page, not a picture in it, and a bureaucratic format, in general.

The college distributed this to thousands of farmers, but I don't believe it

did much good. My immediate assignment right after that when I left to come to Southern States was to do something about this clover and alfalfa seed situation.

So I wrote another bulletin. Remember the same man wrote the story. But I wrote it differently. We put some pictures in it -- the good stuff versus the failures. We pulled no punches in telling the story. And we said some things that probably couldn't be said in a Government-paid-for publication.

But I don't think I am exaggerating in saying that in one year some farmers in a cooperative convinced enormously more farmers than the college had in 5 years with the type of information it was putting out ... even though it was putting out a lot of information to a lot of farmers. Of course, part of the reason for this was that we began to provide the farmers with the kind of seed they should sow.

I see a good many of your publications. I'm a regular reader, for example, of your News for Farmer Cooperatives which I think is splendidly written, attractive and inviting, interesting and informative.

Now of these four markets for your publications that we are discussing this afternoon, I'll admit prejudice in the comment I'm about to make. You have the cooperative market, the educational market, the Farm Credit market, and the Extension market. I concede that all of them are important ... all are markets you should systematically undertake to sell your ideas and research and information to. But I think the most important market you have is the cooperative market.

I know FCS doesn't have the money to send publications to many farmer-members, and therefore you have to work



J. Warren Ranney, Director, Industry Relations, Cooperative G.L.F. Exchange, Ithaca, N. Y. looks at display of FCS publications with Mrs. Stanton. Mr. Wysor made the point in his talk that co-ops are the best market FCS has.

through these other markets. Therefore, I interpret the cooperative market to mean management and directors in particular. And if your function is to help farmers to operate more efficiently and use cooperatives effectively to increase their net income -- and that is about what I think it's all about -- I think that's the best market you have. Here with the management and directors is where the decisions are made, the policies set, the actions taken and where

the cooperative succeeds, does a half-way job or fails.

That's about all I have to say about the topic under discussion. In addition I'd like to say something else. All across this country there is deep and sincere appreciation on the part of farm people -- the farmers, farmer directors, management and other employees of cooperatives -- of the invaluable service to agriculture and to the American farmer and his well-being that you folks make.

The Educational Market

J. K. Stern,
President
American Institute of Cooperation

Competition for attention these days is pretty terrific in the publication business. Each of us is naturally proud of his own production. I write a monthly newsletter that some people read -- at least I find out they do when we make a mistake in it. One of our staff who is seldom in the office at the same time that I am will sometimes ask me a question. I will say, "Well, if you'd read my last monthly newsletter you'd know the answer to that."

So we even have trouble having our own staff reading what the others put out. What I'm leading up to is that we need to cut down our words in this competitive business, tone down our publications.

Trend is for Shorter Publications

In agricultural information work the general trend has been in the direction of shorter publications. Publications should not be made long just because the subject lends itself to such treatment. I did read one of your publications in the last 24 hours that I thought had too much detail.

Here's an illustration of what I mean by brevity. A reporter was writing a story about a bull breaking out of a pasture and getting run over by a train. His editor kept arguing with him to cut down the various versions he submitted to the space the editor thought the story deserved. Finally in disgust the reporter wrote, "The bull came out of the alfalfa. The alfalfa came out of the bull."

Along with brevity then comes clarity. So here's another example for that. A

farmer wrote to USDA, saying he'd been advised to use hydrochloric acid to clean out the flues in his boiler and he wanted their advice. USDA replied, "In using hydrochloric acid in a boiler it combines with some of the metallic elements and the residue might serve to retard the circulation." The farmer wrote his thanks, saying he expected to start cleaning his boiler with hydrochloric acid soon. By return mail, USDA wrote he had misunderstood the information because the acid might have a deleterious effect on the condition of the boiler. Again the farmer thanked them, saying he hoped to start cleaning the boiler with hydrochloric acid next week. Whereupon he got a wire, or so the story goes, saying "Don't use hydrochloric acid, it will eat the heck out of your pipes."



Mr. Stern on right and Mr. Knapp at left talk with Dr. Herrell De Graff, Cornell University. Dr. De Graff was lead-off speaker at a 3 day session of college and FCS men on research on cooperatives. The colleges are one of the FCS markets.

Along with brevity and clarity, I'd like to see more color. You're getting into that, at least on your covers.

Then we all like pictures and good graphs and charts. These charts should be easy to understand, not the kind we

have to sit and study a while to see what we should be able to get at first glance. One way to keep improving our material is to borrow layout and presentation ideas from successful commercial publications.

Going through some of your publications shows you're now doing a pretty good job with subheads. Some of your older ones though are solid type, page after page without subheads. A report of the National Project of Agricultural Communications shows the importance of subheads. In an interview with 1,000 farmers, a number of them said they went through a booklet and glanced at the

that in reading the short summary you can decide whether you want to read the rest of the bulletin.

Effectiveness of publications is not determined by the number of each you distribute because you have a market from here to there. You have some publications for wide distribution that are more or less elementary in character; you have technical publications for a limited audience; and then you have some in between. There is no one audience that gets FCS publications. However, with a particular type of bulletin it may be wise to aim it at a particular audience.



The group of college and FCS research men meeting in Washington for the conference on research in cooperation.

subheads. When they saw one that particularly appealed to them, they stopped and read it.

In this same study, more than any other thing farmers asked for more illustrations. They were about evenly split on whether publications should be longer or shorter; they didn't object to the language used. They judged the publication more by its content than by its length or form.

I like a concise summary so that instead of throwing the bulletin aside, until I have time, which I may never get, to read it thoroughly, I can at least read the summary. Whether you put it at the front or back may not matter too much. I know we decided at Pennsylvania State University that we'd use them in the front so

For example, research bulletins in some detail may be needed. But the Extension man lots of times needs a revision of that, one with the highlights pulled out and put into a different type of language. There's need for short folders or leaflets to cover a wide variety of subjects.

From my experience in membership public relations work, I believe co-op information material should always make clear the relationship of the farmer to his co-op. Members own and control these associations. Thus, this material should state that members sell their products through the co-op, not to it. Members buy their supplies through the co-op, not from it. Members make investments in their co-op; get patronage

refunds from their co-op. They attend their annual meetings, not the co-op annual meeting. If this relationship is not kept clear, the public may become confused about who actually owns the association.

I wrote to several college teachers and researchworkers to get their specific comments on how FCS publications are fitting the educational market.

This cross section of comments by college people revealed they had found FCS publications generally useful. For example, one wrote, "FCS is to be congratulated for both the quantity and quality of research bulletins it has published over the years."

College Men Suggest Improvements

In suggesting ways to improve, several said the publications were too long, too detailed, too descriptive and had too much research terminology. "Publications should be their own extenders rather than relying on the Extension Service or the cooperative education people to get the information down to the ultimate users," was one comment.

Some publications were considered too descriptive and not analytical enough. One remark -- "Some of the publications are written at a too high level, too much research terminology for the average members of a board of directors of a cooperative."

However, another said, "The American people can grasp and understand economic terms as easily as technological terms if they are encouraged a little."

One wanted more detail, particularly State information in "Statistics of Farmer Cooperatives," a survey published yearly by the FCS. He would also like this information published earlier before it is too old. However, he considered this report to have considerable usefulness.

Another said FCS publications were directed at too broad an audience, although he recognized the difficulty of being understandable to the audience and at the

same time trying to make a reasonably favorable impression on colleagues and associates in the field.

One wrote, "I would offer the following suggestions as to how FCS bulletins may be made more useful for college people. In all probability FCS should adopt practices similar to the Extension Service with some of their publications. By that I mean taking the results of their research and preparing separate publications devoted to specific subjects and directed to a special audience. I believe the results of research devoted to farmer cooperatives could be presented to the public in general by small doses and in non-technical terms or in the layman's language."

"College professors need brief, clear and concise material for supplemental class assignments," he also added. "Professors are not lazy but they will pursue the line of least resistance. If reading material or literature is available in a form that can be easily handed out in class -- a several page folder or a fact sheet -- chances are enhanced tremendously it will be used."

One found case studies devoted to a single co-op particularly useful, while another had the opposite experience.

Another suggested a publication to exchange technical ideas as a stimulus to more activity in basic research.

These comments included suggestions for more information on management, legal phases, taxation, and financing.

Saying What We Mean Important

That's the cross section of the comments from the colleges. In closing I'd like to refer to a Michigan study of 40,000 people to find out how they judged whether a person was well educated. Seventy-one percent ranked grammar and pronunciation first; 66 percent ranked ability to meet people second. And 65 percent ranked third the ability to say what you mean. And that last is our big problem in publications work.

The Farm Credit Market

W. G. Hoag,

*Research and Information Division
Farm Credit Administration*

I am always glad to have an opportunity to visit with my old friends in the Farmer Cooperative Service branch of our cooperative family. This is no exception. I am delighted that you have set aside this period to discuss the problems of getting out new publications.

I particularly appreciate this chance to visit with you about your publications. Your publications are your show-case to the public. They reflect the work that you are doing. A relatively few cooperative leaders may know about your work more intimately but most cooperative managers and directors, as well as farm people in general, know you chiefly by what they see in print.

But even more important, however, is the function of your publications in getting your ideas into use. They are an important means of attaining your objective of helping farmers by improving the operation of their cooperatives.

Beryle Stanton asked me to speak on your publications in the farm credit market. After considerable careful thought I decided that our market in Farm Credit is practically the same as your other markets. I came to this conclusion after discussing the matter with several presidents of the banks for cooperatives. The Farm Credit System is interested in having your ideas, as far as they are practicable, and they usually are: (1) read, (2) understood, (3) put in practice. We feel that to the extent you accomplish these objectives you go a long way toward building more and stronger cooperatives.

As direct consumers of your publications, we are trying to keep abreast

of your ideas so that we can help you put these ideas across. In this regard we are chiefly middlemen or allies. As far as the middleman concept is concerned it is only to provide service at cost not for profit. So naturally we are interested in assisting you in any way we can to reach your goal of making your publications as useful and as used as possible.

Here again I believe it is time to congratulate you. For many years I believe Farmer Cooperative Service and its predecessor the Cooperative Research and Service Division, have been setting the pace within the Department of Agriculture in the field of publications.

Improvements Noted

For example in the last two or three years Lyle Webster, Director of Information for the Department, and Harry Mileham, Chief of Publications, have been pushing the improvement of the appearance and mechanical setup of the Department's publications. They have been pressing the need for making them shorter, condensed and concise. They have pointed to the importance of putting the summary and conclusions in the front of each publication. They have stressed the desirability of using double column pages. They have pushed for eliminating, or greatly reducing, space devoted to methodology. In other words, they are urging the planning of publications for the mass of their potential readers. They feel that publications should be tailored to fit the needs of potential customers rather than to the whims of the author.

I congratulate you because these are things that you have been doing in the Farmer Cooperative Service for the past 15 or 16 years.

The points that the Department of Agriculture is now stressing, and we in Farm Credit and Farmer Cooperative Service have stressed for years, are not just to please the editors - not even just to make a publication look good. Rather they are part of the result of the editor doing his or her job of studying the market. The editor must put himself or herself in the reader's place. The editors have to figure out what will make potential readers read, what information they want, and what form it should be in so the largest number will appreciate its importance, read it, understand it, and use it.

Editors Study Communications Research

Editors don't go entirely on hunches or adopt ideas out of the sky. There has been a lot of research over the years. It helps the editors to decide these questions. In other words, the editor tries to study research in the communications field just as you study cooperative and economic research in your service work

with cooperatives. The editor is acutely conscious of the fact your publication is going to be competing for the limited time available to your average reader.

Let's turn to those average readers. One of your largest and most important groups of readers is managers. Most of them have a thousand and one duties and probably have a thousand and one things they should read. Many of the things that they should read are short, are attractive, are well written, and thus they are easy to read. They are the ones that are most likely to be read.

Turning to cooperative directors, most of them are farm leaders, at least within their own communities, so they not only have all their farming duties but usually are engaged in other community activities. Even after the farm work is completed the time that farm operators may devote to reading your publication is not only in competition with the need or desire to read other publications. You also have to compete for the use of his spare time with TV, radio, church, farm and other meetings.



One of FCS' main audiences, the farmer directors of cooperatives. They are mighty busy men, a fact to be considered in writing reports.

The research that I mentioned above in the publication field has involved such things as kind of writing and the organization of a publication, but also includes such technical details as layout, use of pictures, the kind, size and arrangement of type, the length of lines, and many other things.

What Do You Read?

Now let's go back for a moment. Why, for example, should publications be short. How many publications of the Farmer Cooperative Service do you yourself read? And I mean read completely. First, I am sure you should read every one of them. But do you? Which ones do you take up first and read until you are finished. The short ones or the long ones. Have you all read your revision of Bulletin 1 for example, from cover to cover? It is our cooperative bible; undoubtedly you and I should read it from cover to cover. I'll bet, however, that there are quite a few of you that have not completed it. But I hasten to add, I think that Bulletin 1 is an example of a publication that is an exception to the rules. It has to be long to cover all the material that needs to be included. It serves chiefly as a reference book and as such it has to be complete. But even in that publication the authors and editors worked together to make the individual articles as concise as possible.

I am willing to bet that the average manager and average director lay almost all of the long publications aside, hoping to read them at a later date unless their organization is actually involved in the publication. At least they are much more likely to read the short ones as soon as they arrive. And once a publication is laid aside the chances of it being picked up and read go down.

Why is a double column publication better than a single column? It is purely a mechanical matter. Research proves that the eye can read shorter lines of type easier than it can long ones.

Why should summaries and conclusions be in the front of the publication? Even you and I don't always finish even the short publications. We may get

interrupted. Therefore, as editors and authors we want to get the important facts up front where readers are sure to catch our message if they are reading at all. Then if they do read our summary and conclusions, if they become interested in the subject matter they are much more likely to read the rest of what we have to say. It is just an application of modern merchandising. It is a come on. But even if our customers just read the summary and conclusions we are gaining something. They should acquire some useful information in the process.

Why leave out entirely, or reduce to a minimum, space devoted to methodology? There is a place for the discussion of methodology. Some of the reasons for mentioning it are to impress other economists. Another is to prove you used the right techniques. Still another is to make your methods available to other research workers.

But most of your publications are being directed chiefly at managers and directors as we have already stressed. They are your chief market. There is not one in a hundred of these managers and directors who is a trained economist that you can impress with your ability, who is able to decide whether you did it correctly, or who is interested in copying your methods.

As a result space devoted to methodology, particularly in front of a publication, may easily stop a large majority of your readers from ever going any further. It seems to me the place to impress the economists by explaining your methodology, is in the Journals of the Marketing, Farm Economics, and American Statistical Associations, or in papers presented at their meetings.

Another possibility might be to mimeograph the methodology for people who want or need it.

The Place for Methodology

If methodology just has to be included in a publication that is going to managers and directors in my judgment it should be in the appendix. You just cannot risk failing to get your research results and recommendations across to managers



Managers of cooperatives are usually most interested in results and recommendations.

and directors by interrupting your report with information in which they have little or no interest.

In conclusion let me stress the following points.

Keep your mind's eye on your reader. Figure out in your mind what new and useful information you can or have gathered - - - what it is you want your readers to learn about and do something about. Tell them about it just as simply and logically as you can.

Your editors are trained, experienced specialists just as you are trained and experienced in your particular field.

Your editors, therefore, are your allies in trying to help you "sell" your ideas.

The editors are human and all humans are fallible. They can and undoubtedly do make mistakes in judgment just as economists sometimes do. But by working together and sharing your knowledge and making use of each other's knowledge you can come up with publications that really help farmers help themselves achieve a better standard of living through the use of the cooperatives. And that is the goal of most of us who are working together in the cooperative vineyard.

The Extension Market

L. J. Noordhoff,
Information Program
Federal Extension Service, U.S.D.A.

We are concerned here with getting ideas from one person's head over into another's ... with no misunderstanding in the meantime. The better we can do that, the more effective our publications will be and the more useful the results will be for co-op members, managers, or other audiences.

I'd like to mention a 4-point concept of communications. First, your reader has to get the publication in hand. Second, he has to read it. Third, he has to understand it. And fourth, he has to do something about it.

It's just like eating. You sit down to a meal, you eat the food, you digest it and you use the energy.

Notice in both comparisons that each step grows progressively more crucial and necessary. You need to get full action on each preceding step as the foundation for the next step. And it's the end result that really counts -- your reader using the information of yours which he has read.

Extension is the Middleman

With that background, and the previous discussion on your other markets, let's turn to the Extension market. This covers the Extension economists, who in a way are the middle men between you and the farmer members of the co-op.

I wrote to about 15 of these men and received six replies which I would like to summarize for you. The letter dealt with three major questions -- What is your overall judgment of FCS publications? Could you name some which have

been useful to you recently? What specific comments do you have on organization, style of writing, readability, detail and length, and title?

Here is a sampling of their overall judgment. "Thorough, well prepared, provide information that co-ops generally need." "Good." "Fairly attractive, provide useful information." "They give the national picture but tend to generalize too much."

"Reports covering research and analysis of specific problem areas have been of the greatest help and are the most applicable to the solution of cooperative problems in the State."

"Only fair -- from very good to poor. This rating has nothing to do with subject matter."

Why Some Publications More Useful

These comments came in reply to the question on some of the more useful publications:

"Some of the better and more useful FCS publications include the 'You and Your Co-op' series. Contains specialized information for various types of cooperatives. 'Farmer Cooperatives in Our Community' gives good general background of cooperative information, valuable for both youth and adults. Recently released FCS Bulletin 1, Farmer Cooperatives in the United States, contains valuable information about development, extent and present situation of cooperatives. 'Legal Phases of Cooperative Associations' is a valuable handbook."

"'Pricing Milk According to Use,' 'Feed Bags,' 'Progress in Bulk Milk Handling' and 'Farmer Cooperatives in the United States' ... particularly useful because they carry more complete information on subjects of interest and

importance, and are well illustrated."

"Condensed leaflets would be desirable and helpful."

Then, for the comments on the organization and presentation.

"We believe the style of writing and readability could be improved if they were prepared more along human-interest lines."

"My guess is that some of the bulletins are high school level or above and seem designed more for use of leaders rather than directly to lay people."

"A little long, but I can't say they are padded."

"Titles for the most part are interesting. Perhaps they could be a bit more catchy with more action denoted in the heading."

"Would have greater readability if condensed and contained more illustrations to help tell the story."

"Would be dangerous to try and apply the same level of readability and simple style to all FCS publications. Much of it is either economic or legal material and in both of these fields an attempt to oversimplify and to improve readability frequently results in loss of accuracy."

"Much of the subject matter is readable because it deals with an operating situation rather than pure research or theory."

"More subheadings would help."

Comments Favor the News

Incidentally, a number of comments came in on the monthly magazine, News for Farmer Cooperatives, even though this wasn't specifically referred to. "Keeps me abreast of activities of FCS and outstanding co-ops." "One answer to quality of the publications is that in looking over the News, I would like to be placed on the mailing list to receive it. The approach of a monthly publication can be much more interesting to the reader than a conventional bulletin. Further the reader receives it on a monthly basis whereas the other publications are issued only once. I would prefer to see publications on specific subjects perhaps a little more complete and factual with less generalization and

then let the News cover progress reports, special events, timely recommended practices, etc."

"There might be more consideration given to the popular style of writing ... Short items such as appear in News for Farmer Cooperatives headed 'Co-ops in Action' are probably the most read sections in any publication. Perhaps this idea might be expanded."

Need to Be More Specific

Now to wrap up all these comments in a quick package. They seem to agree generally that your publications have served their purposes fairly well. The comment that the publications tended to generalize too much was repeated several times. Our hint -- let's be more specific.

Several voted for the News for Farmer Cooperatives, the monthly periodical. The articles there are much shorter than your other publications, and the shorts in the magazine received several votes also. Another gentleman thought there would be a place for condensed leaflets of the longer publications. Then other specific comments were to make the writing more human, interesting, and personal. Make it warm. Make it a "me-to-you" approach, not something off in the distance.

And finally several said more art, photographs, and illustrations would strengthen the publications materially.

Now, I would like to throw in my two cents worth. I would certainly agree that the News for Farmer Cooperatives and especially the short paragraph items are consistently good. It has meaty articles, well written both by FCS people and others.

I notice that some of your more technical bulletins are rightly aimed for strictly a scientific audience. An example of this is your Bulletin 5, Developing Butterfat Sampling and Testing Programs. Then you excerpt material from it for an entirely different audience and publish it as Circular 11, Selecting a Program for Butterfat Sampling, for co-op managers and members. That is very appropriate, since it doesn't mix the wider audience

with the technical one. That's good, sound publications planning.

Many of your publications have the summary up front. All to the good. I have a prejudice for a summary out front ... why chase the reader to the back for it?

Do Reports "Get Through"?

Now, I'd like to jump the fence a little bit and raise this question. Do FCS publications "get through" to the co-op members?

This point came up in discussing the program on bulk milk handling with one of the Extension men. While there were

Even though FCS and other USDA publications pass through several stages or hands, it's the end-reader, the farmer, who really counts. How well are you serving his needs?

For a minute I'd like to highlight three things that go to make an effective publication for any audience.

1. Sound planning -- the mental blood, sweat and almost tears you may go through in planning the audience, scope, subject matter, approach, content, outline, style of writing, illustrations and so on. All of these go into laying the foundation upon which you finally build the finished manuscript. No amount of excellent writing or fancy art work can



Key information on bulk handling in many publications - FCS' among them -- had failed to "get through" to many farmers.

publications on the subject, among them some from FCS, the farmers who would invest perhaps \$2,000 to convert did not understand some key facts affecting their costs, like route consolidation, buying tanks in large lots at substantial discounts and so on, until they came together into a group meeting. Somehow this key information in publications did not "get through" to them. What results do our work have on the people, on the co-op members who are buying, selling, marketing?

cover up a poor job of planning.

In planning, the first step is choosing your audience, be it bank for co-ops, extension man, co-op member, or someone else. A key point here is this: Don't write one single word until you can "see" your audience clearly in your mind's eye. To use some slang, "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes."

Secondly, you must select the information you want to use. I like to use the expression, "Choose the BIG potatoes."

Sort your mountain of information out into the more important facts.

Thirdly, organize an outline from this sorted-out information; that is, "Put your ducks in a row."

Common Faults Listed

In the field of technical writing, Maurice Haag, for 10 years technical editor of the Agronomy Journal, did a Master's thesis at Wisconsin on "Weaknesses in Technical Writing." Let me quote three sentences that apply to planning.

"There is much evidence in the 100 papers under study that faults in outline and structure (planning) frequently interfered with the efficient communication of ideas. This area of weakness is one that is too often neglected, when in reality it is one of the two or three that is most in need of attention....There is no reason to believe that these agronomy manuscripts differ in any degree from other papers in the general scientific field."

You can get a free 12-page mimeo summary of his study from the Dept. of Agricultural Journalism, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison 6, Wis. Or Mrs.

Stanton has a copy. You'll find it extremely helpful.

2. Actual writing -- striving for readability and for clear, concise, interesting copy. Personalized writing is one approach. Remember one of the Extension economists asked for more interesting, readable, human writing.

3. Illustrations -- choosing the graphs, drawings and photographs.

To produce an effective publication for readers, planning, readability and graphics depend on each other like the points on a triangle.

In closing, I'd like to quote from John Ruskin: "The greatest thing that any human can do is to see a thing clearly and then write it plainly."

Also, from Stuart Chase in "The Power of Words": "When the audience turns away, there is something wrong with the writer's communication line. He should look to his tools. This holds for anyone who has something to say to others. It is primarily his lookout that the message gets through, not theirs."

So, let's keep our reader in mind. Make our publications well-planned, well-written, well-visualized. That is the kind of a publication that really gets through to your audience.

How ARS Reports Research Findings

David G. Hall,
Information Division
Agricultural Research Service, U.S.D.A.

Publications management is another research job for me--just as the study of insects was when I was a practicing entomologist. I'd like to tell you something today about how Agricultural Research Service tries to tell the general public about its research findings, and something of our research in the popular publications field.

ARS is that group of old research bureaus that had their origin early in the history of the Department. In the beginning each bureau was founded more or less by one scientist who did all his own writing, editing, and publishing. As the bureau became larger, two, three, or more men were taken on the staff of the original scientist. After awhile, he became tired of re-writing or editing research reports of his staff assistants. So he hired an editor to look over such reports before he did. This constituted the informational work of most of the Department's research bureaus for nearly 75 years.

How the Division Functions

With the combining of all these old bureaus into the Agricultural Research Service several years ago, all these editorial people, with additional informational personnel, were united in a Division of Information. This Division presently is divided into three parts--a Program Service Branch, a Current Information Branch, and a Publications Branch. Each Branch is responsible for distinct and different kinds of informational work. Work on publications is thus

the oldest of the information services of the Department.

The various research and regulatory branches of ARS have two publications for which they are more or less totally responsible; The Correspondence Aid Series and the ARS Series. The Correspondence Aid Series is a mimeographed series. It furnishes information to the public which does not need be printed; The answer to "What makes leaves turn red in the fall" is an example of a Correspondence Aid. We answer such requests for information on a single mimeographed sheet of paper much less expensively than if we should send the answer in a publication. The ARS Series, mimeographed or offset depending on the number of copies desired, furnishes information to other scientists in the form of temporary progress reports on more or less temporary subjects.

These two inexpensive publications do a rifle-shooting job for a particular purpose.

Do Both Popular and Technical

The Publications Branch of ARS is divided into two sections--the Popular Publications Section and the Technical Editing Section.

Agricultural Research Service issues three kinds of series in printed form. First, we have publications reporting research among scientists themselves. Our Technical Bulletins are an example. Working scientists make up a captive audience. In the old days we spent a great deal of time and money getting scientific research reports into a form considered best by editors. I take the attitude that a scientist has a right to report his research to other scientists in more or

less his own words put in the way he wants. So long as he is fairly grammatical and fairly concise, if his manuscript is fairly well organized, and if he tells his story so his branch chief will OK his manuscript, I suggest to our technical editors that they go along with him.

See Fellow Scientist Over Shoulder

On the other hand, we have 168 million people that depend on us and the 48 states for information on agricultural matters. Our scientists wrote the popular publications of the Department for many years. But we find when a scientist writes a publication, he unconsciously has all his research associates looking over his shoulder. When he completes his manuscript he actually hasn't written to the general public at all. He wrote for a scientific audience. He isn't going to allow his name to go on something that other scientists might think too simply written. He adds all the details; he won't leave out one unnecessary fact. So he usually doesn't tell his story in such a way that the public can understand what he is talking about.

A popular publication in the old style guaranteed grammatical accuracy. The modern-day public demands more than grammatical accuracy. It demands grammatical accuracy, of course, but it also demands readability. And the Publications Branch also demands a publication that leads to acceptance. If the farmer can't understand what he's reading and then doesn't accept the ideas presented, we have wasted both our time and his.

What makes information in a publication acceptable? We don't know, but we expect to find out.

Are we doing a good job of furnishing the public information in publication form? We think so, but we aren't sure. We aren't sure what the public needs really are. This too constitutes a research problem that will require cooper-

ative research over a period of years. We know this; a man doesn't know what he needs in publication form until he has a problem, so we can't ask the general public what the needs are.

The popular publications of the Department constitutes a list of nearly 600 titles. ARS has over 90 percent of these. ARS is responsible for seeing they are kept up to date and modern. Last year we retired over 100 publications. The average age was over 15 years before that. By removing these titles, we brought the average age down to about 13 years. To bring the average age of our publications down to 5 years, which I am convinced must be done, it would be necessary to take a great many scientists off their research jobs and put them on work they are ill-trained to do.

Expect More Serviceable Publications

We are working ourselves out of this problem by putting publications writers to the task of helping our scientists put his facts on paper. We expect by so doing to get publications that will be of much more service to the public than before.

In my laboratory days I found that you can't put a truck driver on a microscope. I learned that you get best results by putting specialists to their specialties. With this background, we in ARS are now asking the research man to continue his research and we help him do the job of getting out our research popular publications by assigning a skilled writer to him to help him do a better job of getting out his facts in such a way that the public can read about them, accept them, and put them into practice.

We find that popular publications produced in this way are grammatical and readable. We hope the information in them is accepted. This last is a research project we hope to get at soon.

Last, but not least important, popular publications produced in this manner cost the public less.

How AMS Reports AMA Research Findings

Forest J. Hall,
Marketing Information Division
Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S.D.A.

The publications that Agricultural Marketing Service issues and those that are issued by Farmer Cooperative Service have a quite similar purpose. You folks are writing for people who are in business, who operate cooperatives that buy and sell. We in AMS are, for the most part, reporting on research intended to improve the operation of industries and trades allied with agriculture. These include processing industries, transportation of farm products, storage, warehousing, and businesses of that sort.

Publications Are Foundation

We have several channels through which we distribute those research results. The publications, with us as with you people, are the foundation of the whole process of distributing information. In those we try to get out a complete report of the findings in a research project.

We and you have made strenuous efforts, sometimes successful and sometimes not so much so, to have these publications written in clear, understandable style -- in simple language, so that a publication can be used by everyone who has an interest in the subject. There are great intellects interested in most subjects, and there are ordinary people interested in the same subjects. We try to make clear to both groups what we are trying to say. We do not want to limit the usefulness of the information we put

out; we want it to be used just as widely as possible.

We have several other channels for distributing information in addition to the basic publication itself. With practically every publication, we get out a press release. This release is usually picked up in industrial magazines and the trade press in general, and serves largely as a notice to the people interested that there is such a publication. The release gives a few highlights of the findings that those people in the industry might find useful.

Use Other Methods

Next, about once a month we get out a television package, a series of pictures plus a little script. That serves to notify a wider audience that we have a research report on a certain subject, stimulates some additional inquiries for copies of the report, and tends to get it into wider use. Also, we develop little radio recordings that are used quite frequently.

We occasionally prepare an exhibit for a convention or similar meeting. Right now, one is being developed for the Agricultural Marketing Association, in which newly developed methods of aerating stored grain are described. These people at conventions are usually the leaders and the more active people in their fields. Such exhibits stimulate inquiries from the people most actively interested, and a consequent wider use of research results.

We have also a monthly magazine called "Agricultural Marketing." The magazine is of limited circulation. It goes mostly to universities, to extension people, trade and industrial magazines, and to other secondary distributors of information. Those channels get the in-



"We try to write up to the busy, capable, efficient businessman," says Forest J. Hall, AMS.

formation to many millions of people before it finishes its travels.

We have one publication which I think is unique in the Department. It's a quarterly called "Agricultural Economics Research." The articles in it are directed entirely to economists, technicians, statisticians, and people of that sort who want technical material. It is written in their language, so that they can make the best use of it.


I have one more thought that, I think, is becoming very widely accepted. That is this: In all this material except Agricultural Economics Research -- in TV, in radio, in research reports, publications, magazines, in all of our material -- we try to write up to the busy, capable, efficient businessman who simply cannot waste his time figuring out too detailed and too technical descriptions of research jobs. He can't waste time untangling

tangled sentences nor figuring out the meaning of abstruse, long-winded words.

We write up to the people who are too busy to figure out what should have been said clearly. The different groups to whom we write include some who have gone through college, some whose education is of high school level, and some who attended only grade school. All of them can understand clear and simple language. The technician can understand it, the high school man can understand it, the grade school man can understand it.


The basic purpose of the Department of Agriculture is to disseminate information. We want to disseminate it to everybody who can use it. Therefore, the more clearly and simply you can do your writing, the more you are fulfilling the function of the Department of Agriculture and of FCS.

Points Discussed




The points raised from the college and Extension letters brought considerable discussion....particularly on the point that FCS publications tended to be descriptive without being sufficiently analytical.

It was pointed out that the Extension man working with management and members has a different situation than a teacher in a college. Mrs. Stanton mentioned that the comments indicated that most of the teachers and Extension people can't be expected to rewrite cooperative information from FCS for their use.




Mr. Wysor mentioned that the manager's responsibility is in one area and the directors in another. That brought the question of whether enough directors were getting FCS publications and studying them.

Mr. Wysor suggested that the News for Farmer Cooperatives was a key publication broad enough and well enough done to help with this. Mr. Mann emphasized that the mailing list of the News allows it to cover but a small fraction of cooperative people. Mr. Knapp mentioned that the News has a tight ceiling both on budget and number of copies that can be printed.



Mr. Gardner pointed out that FCS has a system of announcement cards to cooperative management. Some discussion centered around whether distribution of the publications might be expanded either by sending cards to more people or increasing News printing.

Mr. Abrahamsen mentioned that the directors of regional associations have large impact and suggested they at least might be reached in some way.



In response to questions on the length of farmers' bulletins, David Hall said that the average ARS farmers' bulletin is now 32 pages but that they are generally cutting down the size to 16 pages. He said sometimes the reason they ran so long was because the scientist got involved in telling how many bristles there were on the hind legs of a fly and forgot to tell how we could get rid of him.

Mr. Hall also told about their monthly magazine, Agricultural Research, in response to a question. He said it was a rifle shooting device to give the best of ARS' new information to a selected audience of 38,000 people -- all county agents and the rest of the so-called agricultural leaders audience. He said the 38,000 was only an administrative determination, not a legal one.

Mr. Samuels mentioned that he thought it might sometimes be difficult to stick to 16 pages for a farmers' bulletin. He cited the fact that a bulletin he got on mushroom production didn't really tell him what he wanted to know about growing mushrooms.

Mr. Hall enlarged on this idea -- saying there has never been a study based on what the public actually asks for or what the public really needs in the way of publications. He said the ARS Publications Committee is working toward this -- before a publication is issued, they establish what its purpose is, what its audience is, how many copies will be needed, and why such a publication is needed.

Session III



Design and Appearance

M. A. Abrahamsen, *Chairman*

Parts of a Publication

Leslie Erhardt

Office of Information, U.S.D.A.

On the overhead projector Mr. Erhardt presented the following outline of the parts of a publication:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Name of Parts</u>
<u>Before the Text</u>	{ Preliminaries	{ Foreword Preface Acknowledgments
	{ Previews	{ Contents Summary
<u>The Text Itself</u>	{ Moving into the Report--Introduction	
	{ Body of the Report-----	{ <u>Main Discussion</u> Conclusions Recommendations
<u>After the Text</u>	{ Winding up the Report	
	{ References	{ Literature Cited Bibliography Appendix
	{ Supplemental Data----	

Note: Conclusions and recommendations may precede text.

In the ensuing discussion Mr. Erhardt gave the following definitions of the parts of a publication. He explained that these definitions were based on practices within the Department and had been checked with a number of information specialists in the Department.

Before the Text:

Preliminaries

Foreword: A signed endorsement by other than the author.

Preface: Written by author. May state object and scope, if these are not in introduction. (Never repeat what is in text.) May state relationship of this report to others. May state how to use the report or parts of it. Often includes acknowledgments.

Acknowledgments: Cites help from others. Often in preface. Specific pieces of work should be credited to the persons who did them. A statement of the nature of the assistance is ordinarily sufficient; the author's gratitude may be taken for granted. Suggestions by the author's

colleagues as a part of their routine work need not be recounted. Administrative Regulations allow credit lines for material from nongovernmental sources. Credits are restricted on material produced by Department agencies. Credit lines are not permitted for design, typography, layout work, or illustrations for materials produced at Department expense.

"The best guide is to limit credits to authorship, co-authorship, or direct collaboration to overall planning, composition, and writing..." Credit may be allowed for illustrations if they are significant, original scientific illustrations.

In identifying Department employees, name and agency usually are enough. Avoid: Name, title, section, branch, division.

Previews

Contents: Similar to outline. Follows order of text. Guide to the report. Shows at once where everything is. Consists of chapter titles and/or main headings and possibly subheadings of text.

Summary: Gives highlights of report. Differs from conclusions. Economic readers want and expect it. In scientific writing contains digest of chief points. One-page summary - at least no more than two - preferred. Can use other title than Summary, such as Highlights or Points to Remember. Should be at front of Report.

Keep Summary short; otherwise reader won't read text. Don't repeat sentences of text. Summarize findings particularly.

Abstract: a meaty summary. Summary can be related to outline. Is related to Contents.

Research summary needs care in writing. Serves many purposes. Should be inclusive and brief, simple and direct; tell reader just what is in paper. Sometimes written in numbered paragraphs, each on special phase. Generally follows sequence of text. Includes important ideas and data.

"Business likes to see a summary at the beginning rather than the end of a document."

The Text Itself:

Introduction: (Webster) Introduction properly forms part of the body of the work itself. (GPO Style Manual)...differs from preface in that it is initial part of text.

Important in scientific report. Style and statements can attract or repel readers. In simple words, should state nature of material and delimit its scope; should show importance and timeliness.

Should not be long. Make every word count: "Brevity is more important here than in other part of the paper."

Can state need, purpose, scope, method, objective, definition, origin, development, background, or basis.

Use of word "Introduction" as heading in text itself is rather useless and meaningless. More pointed headings might be used such as Why This Study Was Made or Background of the Study or Objectives of This Survey.

Main Discussion: Organize well. Keep simple and clear.

Conclusions: Follows order of results. Keep brief.

Recommendations: Suggest action to take. Stated only as situation requires. Make terse and direct.

After the Text:

References: If all the citations in the list are referred to in the text, the list is called Literature Cited; if, however, not all the citations are mentioned in the text, the list is called Bibliography.

A large number of references should always be in the form of a list placed at the end of the text. A small number (six citations or less) should be in footnotes. All typewritten material should be cited in footnotes.

In the list following the text the references should be in alphabetical order according to author. For convenience of reference from text to list, citations should be numbered consecutively. The inclusive pagination of an article or book should be given; specific page reference, if necessary, should be made in the text.

A book citation should include author, date, title, edition (except first), pagination or volume, illustrations, and place



In his talk Mr. Erhardt gave results of an analysis he had made of 16 FCS publications indicating how it handles the various parts making up the different types of publications shown here.

of publication. Important series may be noted.

A periodical citation should include author, date, title and article, title of periodical, series, volume, pagination, and illustrations.

Appendix: Includes supporting details; material too extensive for a footnote; also tables, figures, plates, or exhibits too bulky for text; often methodology, definitions, glossary, exhibits; examples; texts of reference items, if brief; sometimes divided into A, B, C. Sometimes can be mimeographed separately as a supplement.

"The time of the reader is valuable, and even though material in an appendix is for reference only, still it should be condensed as much as practicable."

(Note: The above list of parts of a publication is comprehensive but the

various parts are to be used only as needed for a particular manuscript. It is seldom necessary that all of the parts be used.)

Mr. Erhardt cited the results of an analysis he had made of 16 publications of the Farmer Cooperative Service to indicate how the agency handles the parts of a publication. He listed his findings in the following table:

Of 16 reports analyzed

Introduction.	All 16
Contents.	14
Summary	8
Appendix	8
Acknowledgments.	4
Foreword	3
Conclusions	2
Recommendations	2
Preface	1
Bibliography	1

How to Organize Material

Forest J. Hall,
Marketing Information Division
Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S.D.A

My assignment is primarily to give some suggestions for the selection of the material to go into the various sections of a publication in order to produce an effective report.

You folks are probably aware that the basic principles of effectiveness in writing are pretty old. They have been well tested and well established. I'm going to talk mostly about those old and basic principles.

Key Word is Useful

The principal function of the Department of Agriculture is "to acquire and to diffuse among the people of the United States useful information about agriculture." I have heard that quotation given many times, and sometimes with the key word "useful" left out.

That principal function of the USDA, to provide useful information, is also the principal function of the Farmer Cooperative Service and its publications. We in AMS and you have rather similar audiences, and many of our publications are similar to yours as far as their organization and style are concerned. We both write usually for people in business--you for people in cooperative businesses, and we for people in marketing.

It is possible to turn out a beautiful publication, a highly logical one, a learned one, a scientific one, and have it fail completely. If it is not used, it is a failure.

The principal way to get any publication read is to start out with your hardest hitting bang at the front. If you tell a

man, right at the start, how he can operate a cooperative more effectively, and you tell it to him in 10 lines of type-writing, he isn't going to quit reading. He's going to read every word in the book.

On the other hand, if you start out with long introductory matter, with historical, statistical details of how you conducted your research, most busy businessmen will read about the first three pages and decide that they don't have time to go ahead with it. They haven't found anything practical so far; they doubt that they'll find anything practical in the back of the book. So they'll lay it aside, virtuously figuring that some day they will read it, but they never get back to it.

If you show them how to make money, however, or how to operate more efficiently, how to cut costs, reduce deterioration, or do something better right at the start, they'll go ahead and read the whole thing, and put your findings to use.

Now with those preliminaries, I want to run through briefly one method of organizing the material you put into your report. It's a rather simple process, and it's rather fundamental.

Listing Topics a First Step

First, list the topics on which you have gathered information. List them in any order; it doesn't matter at this stage. Then go through those topics and pick out that information which is most useful for the audience for whom you are writing. In your case, that would be the managers and directors of cooperatives, no doubt. In some instances, perhaps, you want to get down to the membership of the cooperatives, and you would want to be even more practical then.

After you have selected all of the material that is practically useful--that tells a man how to do his work better, how to operate more efficiently, how to cut his costs, how to make more money--group those topics and plan to put them up toward the front of the book.

Then you will have remaining the more detailed background information that you have listed by topics. In a financial study, this might include a description of the general financial structure of cooperatives, the detailed methodology you used in making the study, and any historical background material which doesn't tell a man directly how to operate his co-op in a better way. Group all of that material and plan to place it toward the back of the book. Those people who want such detailed material are accustomed to looking for what they want, and they'll find it.

But the busy businessman isn't going to hunt for things. He's going to find it only if you hit him in the eye with it, and he won't find it otherwise. It's a brutal fact, but it's nevertheless a fact.

Recite Your Facts and Findings

After you have divided your material into those two groups, write a clear, running recital of the facts and findings that will benefit the reader--that he can put to use. That should make up the earlier sections of the body of your report.

Then go to work on the detailed statistical and methodological material, the background information, and historical matter. Often it is best to put that in an appendix. Sometimes, if you have a great deal of this information, you might even want to put it into a separate book and call it a supplement.

When you have finished that, it's a good time to write a brief introductory section. The introduction should point out the practical objectives you were looking for to improve the operation of cooperatives. It should tell very briefly how you went about the study. If you studied the operations of 200 cooperatives, mention that, but don't bother to give the breakdowns or details of the way you segregated the co-ops into different

sizes, the way you developed your sample, and so on. Those details should be in the appendix.

The practical businessman for whom you are writing wants only some indication that your findings and your comments are sound. If you give him just that, your introduction can be very brief.



Max O. Brunk, Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University, points to an FCS Circular. Herman M. Haag, Director of Research, Missouri Farmers Association, Columbia, also looks at the display. Publications should be organized with the audience in mind.

Then get right into the business of what you found in the most important phase of your study that he can make use of; then a second phase, and so on. Don't use too many major groupings; it's better to have only a half dozen or so of major sections, with subsections inside those.

Last, write your summary, based on your practical findings that are useful to the practical businessman.

Usually this section is called a Summary; sometimes we call it Highlights, or Recommendations, or Conclusions, depending on what we put in it. This front section is, in my judgment, the most important part of the book. It is an advertisement--it tells the reader, immediately when he opens the book, things that are so important to him and so useful that he feels he must read the whole book and get the whole story. That's the purpose of the summary.

I would like to wind up with a repetition of some very old principles of


effective writing. First, before you start to write, even before you organize your material, make up your mind to whom you are writing, and what they want. Put yourself in the position of the reader; then tell him what he needs to know.

Second, array your material by topics. Select only that material which will be useful to that particular audience, and use only that in the body of your publication. Throw out anything that the reader


cannot use. If you have informative material which is not particularly useful, and you think that it ought to be in the book, put it in the appendix. Don't clutter your useful material with your background information.

And third, after you have selected the material useful to your particular audience, organize this material so that the reader can understand it quickly and easily and put it to actual use.

Points Discussed




In response to a question as to whether to include some of the major points in a preface, Forest Hall said readers pay very little attention to prefaces and tables of contents. The big gun is the summary, whether it is called summary, highlights, conclusions or what. If the reader finds the summary is just a general discussion of the kind of work that was done, the summary is wasted. If the reader finds something practical he can use, he will read the book to discover all the practical and useful things in it.




According to Forest Hall, titles in the form of questions are good, but should be used sparingly. They become monotonous if used too much and folks

begin to ask if the writers don't know the answers. He also said the reader doesn't need background material up front.



AMS limits its summaries to 2 single space pages. An effective summary should be very short.



Someone suggested putting a brief summary of the report on the back cover page. Mr. Hall agreed that that might be a good idea, providing it did not detract from the summary in the book. In lieu of a complete summary, he suggested picking out 3 or 4 important points and including them on the back. A list of publications available or references on the back, he agreed, was good, too.

How and What to Present in Tables

Evelyn Breck,
Brookings Institution
Washington, D. C.

When I was asked to talk about how and what to present in tables, I said I believed I could present better what not to put in them.

The two previous speakers here have emphasized brevity and conserving the reader's time. Certainly that is the approach an editor uses in looking at tabular matter. The audience for the publication and the purpose that it is to serve must be kept constantly in mind.

Readable in Two Dimensions

As a general rule, the purpose of a table is to make it easier for the reader to grasp the significance of data that can be understood and compared more easily in tabular form than in a series of sentences. So a table is a device for presenting data in such a way that they are readable in two dimensions -- horizontally and vertically. The advantages to be gained from tabular presentation are economies of space and time. To realize these advantages, tables should be so constructed that they are self-contained and self-explanatory.

Tables included in the text should be only those that are needed by the reader for an understanding of the discussion. A substantial number of tables prepared by an author while he is doing research on a project can often be placed in an appendix. An example of that method is a study on housing for the aged by a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency. In this publication, the tables that contained the general information on the aging process and a

number of sample tables of the 1950 census data were placed in the appendix, and only the tables that pertained to specific subjects discussed in the text were placed with the discussion.

In a study at Brookings recently, 27 tables that had originally been in the text were placed in the appendix. Some of the data in these tables were charted and the charts were placed with the text. The data on which the charts were based were also placed in the appendix.

In general, short tables are clearer and more forceful than long ones, and they are certainly easier to grasp. Large tables are unwieldy and are a problem for the typographer as well as the reader. If it is necessary that a table be large, consideration might be given to setting it as a two-page spread or turned so that it can be set in a readable size type.

The author, as well as the editor, should try to foresee any difficulties that might arise in setting up tables. If a table is too large to fit the format, consideration might be given to revising it. Various methods can be used to cut the size of a table: material might be rearranged; a large table might be broken into two tables; figures can be rounded; or a table might be reversed.

Example of Ways to Cut Size

One example of a table that might have been made smaller was captioned "Memberships in marketing, farm supply and related service cooperatives, 1950-51 to 1952-53." This table might have been cut in size in two ways: the membership figures, which were given in whole numbers, might have been rounded, thus cutting the width of the table, or it might have been reversed.

There were only three items in the stub and they were years. There were 8 columns in the table, which made it badly proportioned. If this table had been reversed, it would have been only three columns wide, with eight items under each column.

As a rule, a one- or two-column list that contains information used to point up the text can be placed in an informal table without a formal heading or title, and with the discussion to which it pertains. But there is one difficulty in placing an informal table. It should follow immediately the reference to it in the text. If the material doesn't break right in paging, sometimes it is necessary at the page proof stage to cut or pad the text in order to have the table follow the reference.

Formal tables are much easier to handle from the standpoint of typography.

Keep Captions Concise

One or two other items might be kept in mind in constructing tables. One relates to captions. They should be kept as concise as possible. While a great many authors disagree with me on this, I believe that the facts in the column headings or given in the text need not be repeated in the caption. For example, a caption that "Number and estimated memberships of marketing, farm supply, and related service associations, by specified commodity groups, for local and regional associations, 1952-53" might have been shortened by omitting the phrases "by specified commodity groups" and "for local and regional associations" because the column headings carried this information.

In another instance a caption read, "Estimated value of farm products marketed for patrons by geographic divisions, 1952-53." This one could have been shortened by omitting the phrase "by geographic divisions" because that was the column heading of the stub. In addition, the column headings could have been shortened by omitting the repetition of the other part of the title -- "Estimated value of farm products marketed for patrons."

Column headings should be accurate and concise. They should appear as logical subdivisions of your main heading. Any qualifications or limitations of data can be explained in footnotes.

A short title makes a more pleasing appearance on a page than a long one, and, of course, it is also much easier to handle from a printing standpoint.

Let's turn to the "do not's" in tabular presentation, which seem as important as the "do's." Do not put into a table material that is of a different class than most of the other data in the table. A table should be a logical unit. If a clear relationship cannot be shown between the different classes of data in the table, the chances are that clear presentation requires either the use of more than one table or the deletion of the data which are irrelevant.

For example, in a table on transportation expenditures by urban consumers in selected American cities, a column was included on average family expenditures for current consumption. The author agreed that these data were not relevant to the text, nor were they part of a "logical unit" because they were of a different class than the other data in the table. It also was not indicated in the caption, which showed that this table was about transportation expenditures -- not all consumer expenditures.

In another table a caption read, "Use of the Automobile in Selected American Cities." At the bottom of this table there was a four line tabulation which gave the percentage of automobiles used in cities of certain populations. This tabulation was of a different class of data than the rest of the table and should not have been included in the tables.

Don't Run a Lot of Blanks

Do not clutter a table with columns that contain little information where data are not available or are not important. Such material can usually be handled better in a footnote.

Do not print working papers in the finished publication. Every author gathers a great deal of material in his research

that is very necessary to him in making his analyses, but that in all likelihood is not important to the understanding of the reader. They are the primary materials on which the finished tables are usually based.


At times your working papers might be helpful to some readers. If they are they might be put out in mimeograph form, separate from the main publication.

One final "do not." Do not include in the discussion of a table in the text

any figures that are not included in that table. In checking the figures in the text back to a table, it is disconcerting to find some figures in the text that are not in the table on which the discussion is based. If figures not in the table are included in the text, the source should be given in a footnote.


I haven't said anything here about the style of your tables, but would make one suggestion--be generous with white space.

Points Discussed




In answer to a number of questions, Miss Breck made these responses.

It is not necessary to repeat in a chart the same information you include in a table. It is necessary to indicate on the chart the source of the material. Detailed data need not go in, but can be put in the appendix. However, this depends upon the type of publication. Placement of the material also depends on the interest of the audience -- who's going to use it and what is the purpose?




At Brookings we do not use down rules in a table. This was started during the war to save time and cost. Inserting down rules is a hand job, and is time consuming and costly. There are many ways to handle complicated data. Main subdivisions of a table can be centered as a heading within the table and numbered in Roman I, II, and III.




I have no general observations or comments on when to use a table and

when a chart. It depends on the material available and how well it lends itself to charting. Judicious use of color adds to the attractiveness of charts.



As to modifying my comments about shorter titles on tables, I might say that all style rules have to be flexible, and considered in relation to the individual publication. I can conceive of instances, for example, in Census data, where long captions are helpful, and authors accustomed to using Census data are most likely to use long captions. As a rule, however, the column heading can carry part of the information in the long caption.



As for text tables and formal tables, the text table is a small one, usually one or two columns. If the material is an integral part of the text, that is, if it won't stand alone, then I would say put it in an informal table. More detailed information is certainly much easier to handle from the standpoint of format if you put it into a formal table.

Selecting Chart Material and Forms

John R. Riggleman,
Federal Trade Commission

During the past 35 years I have tried in many ways to help develop and improve standards and practices of graphic presentation. In that period I have observed a widespread use of charts by those who know how to use them and particularly by those who do not know how to use them.

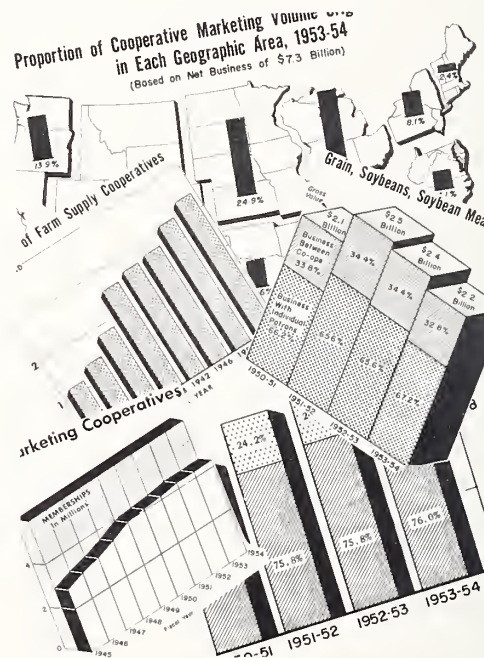
All of us have observed many developments in chart-making which had nothing to do with presenting statistics or with making the desired points. Charts are often used ineffectively or even with no effect at all simply because the makers do not follow the technical standards so important in graphic presentation.

Don't Publish Working Charts

We can divide up the field of graphic presentation in a number of ways, but first let us recognize the two broad classes -- working charts and charts for formal presentation. We have trouble sometimes with those who wish to publish their working charts rather than what they ought to publish in the form of final charts of selected subjects. In most instances, of course, there should be many working charts before one decides what final charts would be desirable for formal presentation.

The selection of final chart materials and graphic forms should be given the most careful attention. The graphic language, when it is used as an aid in presenting statistics is a very important medium, but it is an expensive language and should be used only when it pays to do so.

As a general rule, graphic charts should be used only to help bring out important points when such charts speak in clearer tones than would text or tables. This requirement brings up a number of questions. One of the most important is, what is the technical level of our audience or our readers? We should know the answer to this question in order to know what materials to collect and how to present them. It is difficult to put over a point if we use charts that are either too simple or too complicated for the particular readers for whom we are writing, or for those to whom we are speaking.



Again, we can divide up the chart field according to different geometrical devices or graphic forms. We may be showing simple comparisons of size by means of bar charts or component parts

by pie charts. We may be making simple presentations of arithmetic time series by using bar charts or certain forms of historical time curves.

It may be that our time series are not simple size comparisons over a period of time but are comparisons of rates of change over a period. Then we would use a semilogarithmic graph. We may be showing a frequency distribution using the standard curve forms. We may be making the various correlations that are shown by curves, or we may be showing geographical distributions, using various forms of statistical maps.

Make Appropriate For Reader

Within each one of these groups is a wide range of levels of understanding, depending upon the subject matter and again upon the audience or the readers to whom we are trying to appeal. Unless the chart is appropriate for the level of the reader, we will not put over all that we could have put over in using the graphic language.

When we are planning or making charts for certain readers, we can analyze their possible reactions fairly well by trying the problem back on ourselves. Now, how would I look at that chart? How would it help me to understand certain relationships? When considering such questions one should appreciate that it is really harmful to one's purpose to use charts that are too elementary for the particular readers concerned. They may resent being looked down upon in that way, subconsciously, perhaps. Likewise it is not wise to use charts that are too technical for the reader will not cooperate if our presentation is too far over his head.

Oftentimes we must try to write to a broad range of readers. That makes the problem more difficult, and accordingly the graphic methods must be those that are broadly understood. Of course, we sometimes do not know what the range is and that makes the problem still more difficult.

Another point that is basic is that of determining the place of charts in relation to the plan of organization of the re-

port or in relation to the purpose of the report. Oftentimes, if the report is of a statistical nature, one can summarize it by charting important points throughout the report. Each chart would tell its summary story of each particular point. It might be that the chart would be complete with the title, or we might run a short paragraph under it. The reader can look at the charts with the comments underneath and get the gist of such a report. He will then know what he wishes to do about reading the rest of it.

We have to make up your minds, too, about our readers. How are they going to read our report? What is their attitude? How will they approach it? How do they read reports? Too often a report is written as though the reader is going to start at the first page and read it straight through word for word. But most technical reports, in my experience, are not read in that way. One picks up the report and looks it over. Then he reads what to him are the most interesting parts. Of course, the procedure here will vary widely from reader to reader and report to report.

Opportunity for Chart Summaries

The use of summaries in statistical reports is something that could stand a lot more development. And there are outstanding opportunities in this connection for the use of charts.

Much attention must be given to selecting the most effective methods of graphic presentation for the particular purpose at hand, and particularly in considering how well the reader may understand these methods. Will they enable him to compare the relationships or keep them in mind as desired? If the problem is one of correlating time series, for example, would it be best to show a curve plotted with one time series on one variable and another series on the other variable? Would we show more that way than we would if we plotted two historical curves over the period involved? Such are the problems that must be solved.

We often have trouble in showing rates of change graphically, because the semilogarithmic chart is still not

familiar in many instances to those who are trying to analyze data over a period of time. We may be writing for certain readers who think that they understand the arithmetic curve, and who are afraid of the logarithmic curve. Of course the truth of the matter is that they do not really understand the arithmetic curve if they do not understand the logarithmic curve, because they tend to read rates of change in an arithmetic curve when it shows only amounts of change.

If we are dealing with a problem like this we must decide whether or not to use a chart at all. We may come to the conclusion that we do not dare to use the logarithmic chart, and that it would be best not to use the arithmetic chart either, because it is likely to be misinterpreted. Thus, we would not use a chart at all but would describe our material as best we could in text and tabular form.

Should Stand on Own Feet

On the whole, I believe a chart should stand on its own feet. Ordinarily if a concept or an idea is important enough to show in graphic form, it is important enough to show in a chart that can stand alone when taken out of context and shown by itself. However it is used, it should be complete as a general rule. That means complete with titles, legends, scales, scale designations, formal rulings, and so on.

With reference to the use of pictorial illustrations on charts, I feel that in most instances they do more harm than good. I believe that the best charts are rather plain. Some chartmakers tend to draw extra lines on a chart that do not mean anything. My rule is that everything on a chart should mean something.

One of the great problems in making a good chart is that of making the title clear and complete. We have the same problem in tables. When working out a title we need to ask ourselves how is the chart going to be used? Do we wish the title to tell what the chart is about? If so, we have to answer with certainty the questions of what, when, and where in the title.

Some questions were handed to me on which I will make a few comments: First - Is it objectionable to use both formal and informal charts in the same report when prepared for wide distribution? Here I would say that you have to decide what you are trying to say, and then whether the two types of charts serve you better than either one would alone. If so, I would see no objection to using the two types.

I have been questioned as to rules for using certain kinds of charts for various types of data; that is, maps to show geographical distribution, curves and bar charts to show arithmetic time scales, pie charts and parts of pie charts to show the parts of a whole. But again, the rule is to use the chart that best shows what you are trying to present. There is, of course, considerable overlapping in forms. For example, you might show certain geographic distribution better in a bar chart than you would in a statistical map.


Another question is: Should tables and charts on the same subject be used in the same publication? Here I would like to point out that it often happens that the chart is a summary presentation of the table. In many instances you need both because the chart summarizes or emphasizes the outstanding points in the table, whereas the table gives the whole in detail. You might put the table in the appendix and the chart in the main part of the report, if such an arrangement would be appropriate.

Sometimes Break Into Sub-Charts


Sometimes a complicated chart can be simplified by breaking it up into smaller sub-charts. Having too many curves on a chart defeats your purposes. If the chart is complicated for the reader, oftentimes it can be made more simple by breaking it up into a number of charts.

Obviously the subject of graphics is a broad subject to cover. On the whole, I believe that the graphic language when properly used is very effective in presenting statistical materials. However, it is expensive and should be used only when it pays to do so.

Points Discussed




Mr. Riggleman was asked concerning the effectiveness of popular charts, and the use of color in charts. He pointed out that in current publications, pictorial backgrounds of color are rather often used but that in many instances they do not help to put over the statistical picture. Likewise in many instances he feels that the pictorial illustrations on popular charts do not help and even detract as far as statistical presentation is concerned.



He stated further that in distinguishing between different lines or bars, one

can very often use color instead of black cross-hatching or shading to get a point across more clearly. But in a printed publication the reproduction of color is an expensive procedure and as such imposes strict limitations on its use.



Mr. Riggleman was asked "If you use the headings of charts and tables as a summary, can you eliminate the summary in the first part of the text"? In response to the question, he stated that it might be possible to do this, but that it depended, of course, upon how the headings were made up and that in most instances such a plan probably would not be the best one.

Illustrating Publications

Elmo White,

Office of Information, U.S.D.A.

I come here not as an expert in the field. Techniques and methods change so rapidly that we can hardly reach the point of classifying ourselves experts. But we try to find out and apply as many of the workable principles and theories to our operation as we can. In line with these I also have certain definite thoughts and principles that we try to use in designing publications.

Of all of the media of communicating information, publications are probably more dependent on one faculty for getting that information across than any of the other medias. That faculty is sight.

Publications Depend on Sight Only

Let's take motion pictures. We've combined sound and sight and movement. The visual impact of the motion picture story may not be all that is desired but we can still get our message over through sound. The same applies in television.

But in publications we definitely have to depend on what we can communicate to the human mind through the human eye. As a designer, I like to be guided by the eccentricities of the human eye. Various books written on the psychology of the human eye have proved that the human eye is a very restless faculty, something that has to be coaxed, teased and led. And that is where design is applied to publications.

Time does not permit covering all the phases of designing a publication so we will discuss one particular phase. That phase is illustrations. Have you ever given serious thought to just what

an illustration is? I like to think of an illustration as any piece of art, which would include line drawings, wash drawings, charts, graphs, maps, or photographs which aid, and I use that word emphatically, which aid the manuscript in putting over a particular message.

An illustration has a dual purpose in the publication. It must assist the text in getting the story to the reader's mind and maintain interest. Secondly, on occasion, it can become a substitute for the text.

If an illustration is so important, isn't it reasonable to assume we should analyze what constitutes a good illustration?

There are two broad categories of illustrations - half-tones and line drawings. A half-tone illustration is any illustration with tone values that vary from light to dark. The tones move through the range of values. As an example, any wash drawing or photograph with various shades of gray, light colors and blacks would be classed as half-tone illustrations.

What a Line Drawing Is

Any piece of copy in which the weight of the lines rendered by the artist determines the tone values is identified as line copy.

It is significant to understand the difference between these two because anyone faced with the problem of assembling a publication should be able to identify these illustrations and to understand how a half-tone can be reproduced effectively compared to a line cut.

Time does not allow us to go into this too deeply, but briefly a half-tone illustration is made up of a series of screened dots on the engraver's plate. The size of

the dot picking up the ink determines the value that you get in the half-tone.

The line cut is made up of an etched plate representing exactly the rendering the artist prepared.

Now moving along, when do we apply an illustration? When do we use an illustration in a publication? We only use illustrations when they lead the eye and assist the text in explaining the subject. We all try to emphasize simplicity in our publications and that certainly applies to the use of illustrations.

Here is an example of what we have tried to do. Compare this cover illustration on the old bulletin to the one on the revised bulletin. The title of publication is "Judging Sheep." In the old illustration we have a photograph with a background of trees and grass, several individuals and three or four sheep. The normal reaction of the human eye is to explore all the elements in that illustration. Thus you lose the impact on the one thing that we are interested in -- sheep.

New Approach to Cover

In the new approach we used the same photograph, enlarged it, crossed out all the background elements and put the main emphasis on sheep, the main concern of the publication. The simplicity of that background makes it easier for the human eye to follow. The illustration creates interest and makes the reader want to read the story even more.

Now let's go on to the rest of the publication. Here is a full spread, a column width illustration, as treated in the old publication. The title is "Inspecting the Head of the Sheep." You can see the head of the sheep but you are also conscious of part of its body, the hands and the arms of the inspector, and the background.

Here we have taken that photograph and reduced it in size. We have actually enlarged the main element of that photograph -- the head of the sheep -- but have made a smaller illustration. We believe that the story has much more impact.

Those are two examples of some of the considerations the designer or author should apply in reviewing his photographs.

This brings us down to the point of cropping photographs. Probably none of us in the room has been in the happy position of having the ideal photograph to tell the story that we wanted to put over in our publications. But certainly with the photographic material we have at hand and a careful analysis of the text that applies to the illustration, we can get the emphasis we want by cropping that illustration.

Some Guides for Cropping

So I'd like to pass these little guides along if they will be of any value to you. In cropping photographs, place the emphasis on simplicity. Eliminate all the superfluous material in the illustration that you possibly can. Get the emphasis on the subject matter. Get the illustration as large as is economically possible to use. I insert that word "economically" because in making a publication we are guided in the number of pages by the number or size of illustrations we use. So use your illustrations wisely.

If you think the subject matter for the illustration is large enough and sharp enough, and it is not necessary to enlarge it, then use it as a small cut. You can get just as much emphasis on it by cropping it wisely as you can by using the full photograph.

We recommend sizing your photographs with a ball point pen or your desk pen. Mark the cropping lines very lightly in the white margin around the edges of the photograph.

Frequently we run into what basically has the possibilities of being a good photograph, but when it was submitted the author, editor, the photographer, or even the artist has taken that photograph and actually trimmed it. He has cut it down to the size as he visualized it in his finished publication.

That is wrong for this reason. When the photoengraver shoots the negative of your photograph before transferring it to

an etched plate, it is a physical impossibility for him to control the exact size of that negative. Temperature and humidity influence expansion or shrinkage in the photoengraving process. It is always wise to leave excess material outside of the area that the photoengraver is going to use to make the page.


One other thing is particularly true when applied to printing photographs. This illustration has a good tone value for a reproduction. It has what we call grays or black grays. By the same token, some photographs have what we call a blue gray tone. They have a definite bluish cast. Prints that have not been washed carefully enough to remove all the hypo will develop a brownish cast over a period of time.

What happens when you submit various


numbers of these three different tone values in a series for a publication? The photoengraver's camera photographs the warm brown tones darker. But this camera photographs a bluish cast tone lighter because the photoengraver's camera is susceptible to blues; it fails to capture all of the tone value. By the same token, the photoengraver's camera would pick up accurately this particular type of photograph with its grays and black grays.

How many of you have picked up your publication and seen a light illustration on one page, next to it a dark illustration, and a good one right next to that? In most cases you can go back to your original copy and trace the difference to the fact that you had photographic prints of various tone values.

Points Discussed




A question was asked for a definition of cropping a picture. Mr. White replied that to crop a photograph is to determine the area of the photograph that we want reproduced in the final illustration. We indicate cropping by marking lines to show the area included and the reduction or enlargement size. You determine the vertical height or size and the horizontal width and indicate the lines there.



Mrs. Stanton asked Mr. White to talk a little about choosing pictures, action shots and the like versus pictures of buildings. Mr. White answered that success of Walt Disney and his Mickey Mouse was the human element, the personal appeal. If you can get these qualities in your pictures, you have the battle licked. It is the instinct of the human being to be attracted by human nature and the human element. So if you have a choice, try to get a figure or an animal

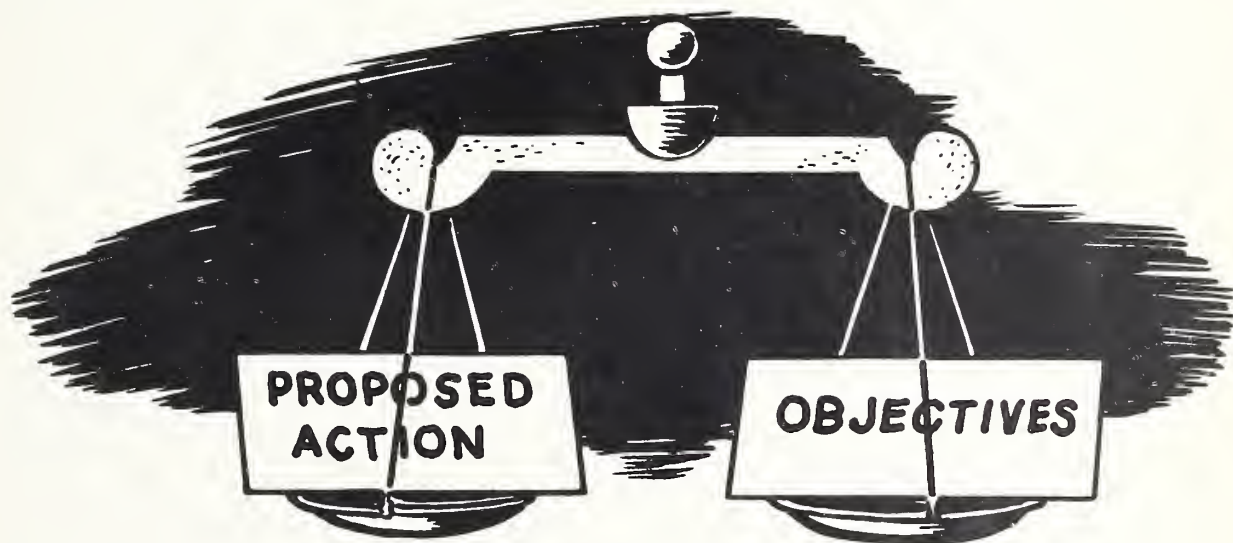
or something indicative of action in your photograph.



On those same lines, he said, I would like to caution you. If your publication is a one shot publication; that is, if you are trying to get out a particular story now, you are all right. But if your publication is going to be used for reference over a period of years, you can limit the value by using photographs that identify clothing of a particular period. This also applies to machinery of a particular period, or a technical operation.

There is nothing that dates a publication more than a photograph, say, of a girl out in a field with high button shoes and a sunbonnet. If you are employing figures of a dress or costume, try to arrange the cropping so that you don't see all of the figure. If dresses are longer, or other apparel of a particular or a different cut, by cropping your photograph you don't date your publication. That is good practice.

Session IV



Evaluating a Manuscript

K. B. Gardner, *Chairman*

Writing to be Read

Val C. Sherman,
National Milk Producers Federation
Washington, D. C.

Pardonably, the following piece is not an example of "writing to be read." It is the slightly edited transcription of some loosely organized remarks, and therefore is not "writing" in the sense that writing is herein treated. -- V.C.S.

Three basic facts should be recognized by whoever writes a manuscript: (1) writing to be read is a highly competitive job; (2) almost everyone can improve his competitive position; and (3) a friendly editing of the manuscript is one important aid to this end.

One of the first aims of a writer should be to attain a favorable competitive position. Everyone who writes is competing for the readers' time and attention. He is competing with similar publications; with other types of publications; with radio and television; and with countless other counter attractions. One of the ways he can meet this competition is with good writing.

Every writer has a two-fold problem: to get the reader's attention and then to keep it. No writer has a captive audience. Even after people ask for and receive your bulletin or circular -- if they don't like its looks, you may lose them on the first page. If you have something to write about you'd like to have as many people as possible read it. You want to gain readers.

Getting Attention Is of First Importance

Getting attention, to a large degree, is a matter of format, general layout, and design of publication. Unfortunately

writers are not much concerned with general format. But even in such a simple thing as a memorandum you can do a very good job in commanding attention for your material by giving a little attention to its form. For example, in a long memo, you can indent at least one paragraph; put in a few subheads; and ask your typist for plenty of white space in the margins like this:

Remember how advertising agencies dress up their wonderful brochures when they are trying to sell a piece of advertising copy. They spend more time and effort on the format than they do in the text, or at least as much time. It pays off.

Titles are another attention getter. If the title of your manuscript is appealing, it will attract readers. Seek for a headline with wide interest. Put verbs in it. If your subject requires a long title, vary it typographically. Perhaps use a subhead.

Getting attention is one thing. Keeping attention is another. And that is the major concern of those who write to be read. Good writing is writing that is easily understood; that holds attention. It must have those two qualities.

Writing that Comes Naturally

Good writing is saying things the easy way, the natural way, the unstilted way. It means avoiding professional jargon and cliches, even if they are "new cliches." Everyone falls into the habit of writing in the terminology of his own profession or craft, whether they be a lawyer, economist or whatnot. This makes for dull reading for anyone but another economist or lawyer.

Good writing does not mean "writing down" to people. In putting your thoughts in a manuscript, be yourself. Be interesting, and charming, if you will. Project your personality into your thinking. Your manuscript will be much easier to read.

In our communications with our fellow men, many of us have Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personalities. In our conversations we are our natural and articulate Mr. Hydes. But when we put pen to paper we go into verbal paroxysms that turn us into Dr. Jekylls. We scare away our audiences with our cumbersome language.

The Simple Mechanics of Holding Readers

A writer really shows his skill when he can hold his reader's interest. This involves several effective techniques.

First is word choice -- choosing the precise word you want to use to get your idea across. Second is word and phrase affinity combinations -- words that go well together and combine to make your sentence hold interest. Third is easy-to-read sentences. Two or three short ones are much better than one long one. Fourth is a rhythmic sequence -- an easy, natural flow of thoughts in a properly engineered paragraph. Don't make your reader jump all over the place and back again.

There are several paragraph gimmicks to help the flow of the manuscript and tease the reader along. The first one shouldn't be overused. It is the trick of ending a paragraph with a question which is answered in the subsequent paragraphs.

Another is the trailing phrase paragraph. If you have a complicated idea that cannot be explained easily in one

paragraph, break it up. End the first paragraph with...and follow it with two or three short paragraphs that break the idea up into segments.

This is similar to the unfinished business paragraph which precedes a number of points you want to make. Simply follow the introductory paragraph with paragraphs numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on.

Then there is the straight connective paragraph. Although some grammarians look askance, it starts off with an "And," or "But," -- or more properly with an "In the meantime," "As a consequence," or "On the other hand."

Indented paragraphs are always good. Make a practice of indenting one of the paragraphs in every page of a form letter. It is much more attractive in appearance, and the reader's eye is more easily led down the page.

Last on the list is the short paragraph -- one sentence paragraphs that you throw in the middle of some longer ones.

Some of the Pitfalls of Writing

There are several reasons why we don't write as well as we could. All of us get into bad writing habits. We get trite; we use the same phrases over and over again. We fail to inject the originality that we could if we would give a little bit more time, thought, imagination and fresh approach to a phrase, idea or example.

Then, too, we know our own subject so well that we lose our objectivity. We fail to put ourselves in our reader's place. Consequently we sometimes jump over things we shouldn't jump over. On the other hand, we sometimes spend too much time on things we might well avoid. Many of us tend to be unnecessarily verbose. We don't take the pains to be considerate of our readers, to conserve their time. We are repetitive through mere carelessness, and we often bury our thoughts.

As for how long a manuscript should be, there are two general types of long



Val Sherman says a brainchild deserves examination by a trained editor just as a human child needs examination by a pediatrician.

publications. One is concerned with a difficult or complex subject and needs many pages to give it adequate treatment. The other is long simply because the author is inclined to tell everything he knows.

There are two types of short manuscripts as well. One handles a difficult or complex subject in a condensed form. The other deals with a short and simple subject.

The principal difference I see between a technical bulletin and a popular bulletin is in their degree of detail. Although a technical bulletin goes into more detail, it can be just as interesting as a popular version. The technical bulletin has all the background material that is essential to one who is going into a sub-

ject very thoroughly. The popular bulletin merely simplifies this information.

Every Brainchild Deserves the Best

As for my third thesis, I think we can all agree every manuscript deserves editing.

Every author has an inherent love for his brainchild and he often fails to see its faults or blemishes. With a human child, we don't trust ourselves.

We have it examined by a pediatrician. We see that it gets shots and every other care to protect it from the cruelties of the world.

For authors, it is just as important to have their brainchildren examined by editors. It is important for the manuscript that any malformities there should be corrected. The manuscripts should appeal to just as many people as possible, and editors don't want to mutilate it, only perfect it. They are interested in producing the best results they possibly can by a job of mutual cooperation with the author.

Occasionally I have a brainchild, too. I insist that it be gone over by as many people as I can find who have the patience to read it. For one thing, I always have it checked for grammatical lapses. But most important is to have someone read it with a critical eye. A thought that may be crystal clear to me may turn out to be very hazy to the reader. Unless the reader reads with interest and understanding, my effort is lost.

And that is why -- as a writer -- I urge all others to give their brainchildren the advantages of the careful, tender, and sympathetic ministrations of an editor.

The Author Evaluates His Manuscript

Hilary Milton,
*Presentations Support Division
Department of the Air Force*

In putting into words the thoughts I wanted to get across to you this afternoon, I wrote down a statement of my presentation purpose. It went like this:

"During this short period I intend to discuss with you and insofar as possible within the limitations of my training, background, experience and desire, providing I can hold your attention throughout this implementation of the announced subject of discussion, and provided further that my capabilities for sustained discourse are satisfactorily complimented by a favorable atmosphere, in order that we may all strive diligently to satisfactorily present our mental meanderings into some form of linguistic communication, the better to create the desired stimulation to action of all personnel concerned, to impart to you the broad essential principles necessary for written verbal communication."

Well, of course, that's a lot of hog wash. But it isn't so unusual in government writing. To illustrate the point a little further, someone recently decided he would rewrite a little piece of the Bible. I'll give you his version and then what it actually was: "By virtue of the authority of sound in the ranks of Heavenly administration, the Lord has been duly designated to act in the capacity of my shepherd, the resulting implication of this will be that I shall not be required in any way to resolve anything on my own part." The original reads, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Now to get down to my subject -- to evaluate your manuscript, you should

rework and recheck it according to the steps of good writing.

Review Plans Made at Beginning

One of my writing instructors once said the best guide you could give any writer once he completed a manuscript was to put it up for one year, then bring it out and look at it a year later. In government writing we don't have that time, so we have to work almost immediately upon completing the manuscript. But I would suggest to anyone, after he has finished a manuscript, to review the plans made at the beginning of the writing. What was the need for data, instruction,



Hilary Milton says re-identify and re-define your audience during the evaluation process.

or information? You may have jotted down the needs you had to answer.

Then re-identify and re-define your audience. Who is going to read it and what do they expect to get from it? We can glean from correspondence, from requests, or other sources something about these people who read our writing -- their educational, their technical background. If they know nothing about the subject, we should know that also, and go slower for more understanding.

So after you have finished your manuscript, recheck your audience. Have you given what you think the audience should have? Have you put words together that they can use effectively and understand clearly? Remember that any government communication has one purpose. That is to communicate an idea from the author who is a specialist to people who do not have that knowledge. The writer is only the pathway for the idea to take. And the quicker a reader can go through the publication and understand it, the better off he is. So concentrate on expressing your thoughts to convey the idea to the reader in meaningful form.

Re-examine Your Outline

Particularly for sustained writing, it is logical and obvious that we need a good outline -- and one spelled out. I don't mean a one or two word outline. If you say "cooperatives," "butterfat," or "cotton ginning" in an outline, you may know what you meant at the time you jotted that down. But a great deal of writing will take place between the time of outlining and the time when the writing is finished. So put in more detail than that.

After you have finished the manuscript it is a good idea to go through again and prepare a second outline. Then compare this to the original. They may both be good, but do they answer the purpose of your original plan? Which is the better approach? Did you lose something in the second approach? Have you gained something here?

Next, you should examine the sequences and placement of topics and subtopics. As you read through you will possibly

catch little points. Pencil check them but don't try to shift paragraphs or topics at this stage. You may find something later that will change your first idea. Study the total manuscript in its continuous form. Then shift sections, paragraphs, topics as they may need it.

There is no trick of the trade for this. It takes careful thinking as you read through. There is no little gimmick that I know of that can solve this organization problem. But it is a most important step toward insuring a cohesive end-product.

Usually when you have a manuscript to prepare, you decide on a course of action. You may not identify it as psychological, logical, or chronological sequence of ideas; but one of these three will probably make its way into your writing as you progress. You choose the sequence of ideas that you think will appeal to the reader.

Perhaps as you read through, this sequence may seem out of order. Maybe it should have been psychological instead of logical; maybe you should have appealed to the man on simpler things; maybe some of the things at the end would have been easier to understand if they had come earlier.

An Air Force example will illustrate my point. A subject matter specialist wrote a manual on helicopter flying training. One of our writers completely reorganized it -- thinking the manuscript should run from the point of starting the helicopter, to actual take-off and landing. That was logical and made sense.

But the subject-matter man objected on this ground: They didn't teach in that sequence. They taught from simple to difficult. It is easier for a man to hover a helicopter than for him to start it or take off. So they took the simpler steps first and gradually progressed to the more difficult.

Thus the first approach to the manual may not always be the best. I'm not saying we always need to change but we always need to evaluate.

While you are going through the manuscript, you should also look at the wording of the topics you have set up. See if they tell the reader in epitomized form what he is going to get next. See if you have introduced him to the next few

lines or paragraphs. If not, they should be reworded so they become more accurate signposts to the text.

Review the Continuity

Continuity depends on some kind of a sequence. Introductory devices are common. They make good writing. As you evaluate the manuscript see if you have introduced elements or segments of the text itself. In a long portion of the text, did you use some introduction at the beginning which would set the pace, epitomize in a sense, or tell the reader how to use the following material. A popular magazine -- one all of you are familiar with -- uses a paragraph in bold face to start with to lead the reader into the body of the article.

I suggest using introductions for long pieces and topic paragraphs for segments of writing. Sometimes this seems mechanical to us as we write. But remember we are usually writing every day. And the man who reads the publication isn't reading the same sort of thing all the time, so it doesn't become monotonous or mechanical to him. If you don't take him by the hand and lead him, he may not follow you.

We also need topic sentences sometimes at the beginning of the paragraph, sometimes halfway into the paragraph itself. Placement of mechanics that you use depends upon your own skill and your own method of handling words.

One common failing in writing for the reader is that we do not use transitions. We don't bridge gaps. We write this segment and we write this block, and we write this chunk of material. In between there are thought gaps. As writers we have the problem of bridging these, of relating the ideas. In reading and evaluating your manuscript, notice if you have tied related ideas together. If you fail to make this connection, the writing will be jerky.

These transitions may be paragraphs, they may be sentences, or they may be only relationship-showing devices. Here is an example I culled from one of your publications. It originally read this way:

"Retail home delivery is the traditional way of selling milk in this country.

It is often attacked as an archaic and highly expensive way of distributing milk. It is frequently defended as a means of obtaining dependable sales outlets."

Now there is nothing wrong with that writing. But there is a certain gap between thoughts for the reader. Small, but still a gap. Now, let's see what we can do with it:

"It is often attacked as an archaic and highly expensive way of distributing milk. On the other hand, it is frequently defended as a means of obtaining dependable sales outlets."

The little mechanical gimmick thrown in there makes the difference between a bumpy and smooth road for the reader. If nothing else, you can use first, second, third.

Next, in reviewing your manuscript, notice whether or not you have summarized satisfactorily for the reader when you come to the end of a segment of the text. Maybe when you have gone through several pages of text you have gotten a little complex. As the reader gets to the end, he will want to assimilate all this information, to tie it all into one package. As a writer you can help him simplify that job if in some manner you have epitomized, summarized, or gathered together the material.

You can say in a simple sentence, "In summary, this means ..", "In conclusion, these are the results." Or you may need to take a paragraph, or even two or three paragraphs if you are summarizing a chapter.

Is the Writing Simple and Clear?

Now for the next point -- Is the writing itself simple and clear?

An effective sentence is one that flows from beginning to end with very little breaking. Reading your publications, I noticed that some of you people are careful about that. You don't have the loaded sentences such as I started off this talk with.

I did notice, however, that some of them did have an overload of material, one that requires the reader to pause and to concentrate. "The maximum degree of accuracy attainable by a practical limited sampling program can be no

greater than the procedures used." "Rapid growth in memberships has also been effected by the increase in the number and variety of services which have become available through cooperative enterprises." In themselves these sentences aren't hard. But in a body of text they require the reader to pause and concentrate at the expense of what has gone before, thus losing some of their effectiveness.

Check to see if your sentences are relatively short. Are they free of inversions, modifying phrases, and parenthetical expressions? These usually make difficulty for the reader. When you spot them, make two or three sentences out of the one involved one. If you can't do that, maybe you can take out much of the garbage, just leaving the container. Frequently that will tell the story just as effectively, anyway.

What Is a Paragraph?

You have probably seen a lot of definitions on paragraphs. I believe this one is good for any of us who are in the writing business. "A paragraph is an adjustment of a given type of material to the capacity of the reader to accept such material."

If it is heavy material, filled with statistics, data, historical facts and dates, then your paragraphs should be relatively short. Adjust the length, depending upon the complexity of content and on the concentration required to absorb and accept it. Collegelevel groups have been trained through their education to take a bigger package and concentrate over a longer period of time than a man with an eighth grade education.

Also, stagger the size of the paragraphs. Some people say this is ridiculous because thoughts may not fall that way. But scan a magazine and notice which articles have eye appeal. It's usually the ones which have used different paragraph lengths. If your paragraphs don't fall naturally into an irregular pattern, revise, cut, and change them to get the desired effect.

Now, is the writing itself effective? Will the readers know the words? In most manuscripts common and simple

words can be substituted without any loss. Sometimes buy does as well as purchase, figure as well as compute, try as well as endeavor.

Pick out the cumbersome words. This doesn't necessarily mean the three-syllable words if they are meaningful in the text. But usually the "ion" words such as implementation and augmentation can go. You can get the verb in there -- to justify instead of justification.

In other words, use the base words where possible. Others require even the most capable people to interrupt their concentrating and to go back to a simpler form for a relationship.

In writing, I would avoid as much as possible the passive construction...has been done, was accomplished. Get the subject in there first and your active language will improve your writing.

I would avoid an overabundance of adjectives and adverbs, particularly those with a subjective nature. "Obviously those granaries can't do such and such." Obvious to whom?

We can personalize our statistics and make them more effective. We say, "Twenty-five percent of the people in this room have pencils in their hands." Convert that to, "One out of every four people in here has a pencil in his hand."

Now -- have you actually edited your writing for punctuation? There are always certain points of grammar you should remember. One of the biggest faults is that authors separate the subject from the verb with a comma, that is, to insert a phrase or a clause that makes awkward reading. You don't put a comma between two independent clauses when you have no coordinating conjunction. Use a semicolon or a period. And, of course, put a period at the end of a sentence.

Did You Integrate Illustrations?

Now for one last point on reviewing your manuscript...the use of illustrations. Did you refer to them when you wanted the reader to look at them? Say, "As you will notice in the accompanying photograph." Give him a clue when you want him to look. Call his attention to

one or two salient features in the statistical information you are including.

Also, place them as close as you can to the text they support. Of course, we can't always control the placement of our illustrations in a publication. But the closer they are, the easier it is for the reader to use them effectively.

Evaluating a manuscript is no simple task. None of us likes to revise the finished product, and few like to have someone else pick our brain children to pieces. But it is the best approach I know of to get a rough manuscript smoothed out. Evaluation by you and by someone else won't guarantee you a perfect product, but it will guarantee improvement.



Points Discussed

After Mr. Sherman's talk, Mr. Savage asked if there wasn't some value in repetition, especially if you have an idea worth repeating. Repetition is a secret weapon, Mr. Sherman said, and has its place, but can be used carelessly.

In response to a question by Mr. Knapp if Mr. Sherman had a rule of thumb as to whether the Federation's writing is read, he said they can judge somewhat by the amount of material reprinted from its publications and also by requests for additional copies. Then the Federation uses a clipping service, and also sends mats to about 800 smaller newspapers. However, the NMPF has no check on individual farmers.

In reply to question about whether sentences tend to become monotonous if we don't invert or change their form somewhat, Mr. Milton said that certainly sentences should be varied to decrease monotony. But he re-emphasized that inversions and parentheticals should not

be used at the sacrifice of readability, or so they make the reader stop too much.

Mrs. Stanton asked Mr. Milton if putting a summary at the end of a section or chapter dispensed with the need for an overall summary for the publication.

Mr. Milton said the FCS had made effective use of summaries in the beginning of its publications, that these are good. He mentioned that business reports now use summaries up front. But the reader sometimes can't come back to the overall summary in a long publication. Therefore, you can summarize in two or three paragraphs for each chapter. And a lot of people use this smart trick -- tell your reader that you know you are repeating.

Mr. Savage asked if the summary should come first or at the end of the chapter.

Mr. Milton replied that it is frequently good to introduce the chapter with the statement, "In this section of the publication we are going to explain to you such and such." Then at the end, "As you notice if these relationships are true this

will apply in such a case'' or something similar. Whether it is necessary to have a long introduction or summary is left to the writer's judgment. But the idea of packaging is good.

part summaries are good for detailed and technical manuscripts.

Mr. Knapp inquired whether when he spoke of the summary he was also thinking of the same thing as conclusions?

Mr. Milton remarked this is a fallacy too many writers have used in summaries -- that often summaries are nothing more than tables of contents. Summaries should get the essence for the reader. Conclusions are usually applicable for reports because they evaluate the information, while summaries do not necessarily do this. Highlights or the Epitome are used quite frequently with business reports. It doesn't matter what you call them as long as they give a bird's eye view of what the reader is going to get. He said

Mr. Milton also made the point in the discussion that it's a good idea to check to be sure you have introduced the problem on the first three or four pages of the manuscript.

He also replied that he would suggest a comprehensive outline in the beginning stages of the work on a manuscript -- not paragraphs but certainly as far as topical sentences. This will be the skeleton to guide the writing. You might know what you were thinking when you jotted down a one-word subject for an outline. But 6 weeks later you may have lost the context of the thought. A complete outline will also help crystallize your thinking.

Session V



Work Groups

What the Work Groups Did

The third morning smaller work groups put into practical application some of the things they'd been hearing discussed the past two days -- how to write better and how to organize a report.

The committee working out the procedure for the morning consisted of

K. B. Gardner, H. H. Hulbert, Ira Stevens and Sarah C. Saunders.

Samples of the work papers handed out follow at the end of this section.

The economists divided up into six groups. Each group had a chairman and an information consultant. These were:

Group I -- Chairman - John J. Scanlan, Chief, Poultry Branch, FCS
Information Consultant - Ruth Nordin, Information Division, Soil Conservation Service

Group II -- Chairman - Martin A. Abrahamsen, Director, Purchasing Division, FCS
Information Consultant - Jerome H. Perlmutter, Office of Information, USDA

Group III -- Chairman - Kelsey B. Gardner, Director, Management Services Division, FCS
Information Consultant - Frank L. Erhardt, Office of Information, USDA

Group IV -- Chairman - Donald E. Hirsch, Chief, Dairy Branch, FCS
Information Consultant - Alice Nelson, Chief, Publications Branch, Foreign Agricultural Service

Group V -- Chairman - Ira M. Stevens, Livestock and Wool Branch, FCS
Information Consultant - Amy G. Cowing, Federal Extension Service

Group VI -- Chairman - Helim H. Hulbert, Chief, Business Administration Branch, FCS
Information Consultant - Forest J. Hall, Marketing Information Division, Agricultural Marketing Service

Right after the morning sessions, the chairmen of each group gave Forest Hall a brief copy of the outline the groups had worked on so he could discuss them in the afternoon round-up session.

Reports later from a number of people in these groups were highly favorable -- many of them similar to one man's comment, "This work session seemed to make it sink in."

FCS Report Writing Workshop

Memorandum to Group Leaders

The following suggestions are offered as a time schedule for work groups in connection with the organization of material relating to the financing study:

1. It is suggested that each group (as a group) spend the first 10 minutes of their allotted time in reading the statement and studying the attached questionnaire.
2. Each group will spend the next 30 minutes (individually) in the development of major headings arranged in logical sequence for presentation of the fields of information covered by this study.
3. When the major headings have been determined and arranged each group will next turn its attention (individually) to the development of primary subtopics under the major headings, with the result that at the end of the 30 minute period each member of each group will have developed an outline for the write-up of the study.
4. The audience for this publication will be largely managers and directors of regional and local cooperatives.
5. In the remaining 30 minute general discussion period, the groups will resolve any differences of opinion as to the arrangement and treatment of major headings and primary sub-topics.
6. The workshop will also be asked its opinion on the form in which the information should be published and how many publications should be used to present results of the study.

Readability Samples

Although it is recognized by the Central Efficiency Rating Committee that there are many very desirable changes which could be made in the present efficiency rating system in order that it can be made more realistic and more workable than it now is, the committee is of the opinion that no further change ought to be made in the system as it now exists during the current year. Because of the conditions that presently prevail throughout all of the country and the resultant very great turnover in personnel, and also because of the serious difficulty in administering the Federal program, it is believed that further mechanical improvement in the rating system as it now exists would require retraining of the staff and other administrative expense which under the circumstances would seem best to be withheld until the official termination of hostilities, and until after regular operations have been restored.

- - -

It is believed to be evident that a very substantial number of the people within the continental boundaries of the United States have inadequate financial resources with which to purchase the products of agricultural communities and industrial establishments. It would appear that for a considerable segment of the entire population, possibly as much as 33.3333 1/ percent of the total, there are inadequate housing facilities, and an equally significant proportion is deprived of the proper types of clothing and nutriment.

1/ Not carried beyond four places.

Statement Relating to the Financing Study Selected
for Use at the Report Writing Workshop

[Questionnaire also Used in Session]

1. The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives requested the study in the summer of 1954.
2. FCS developed questionnaires in the fall of that year.
3. From the FCS files of farmer cooperatives a sample was selected consisting of all the regional cooperatives and every fifth local cooperative. Bargaining associations were not included.
4. Questionnaires were mailed early in 1955 to this selected sample, and second request follow-up letters, containing a "Word of Explanation" designed to help managers and accountants in completing the questionnaires, were mailed a month or two later to non-respondents.
5. As the questionnaires were returned they were edited for completeness and accuracy. In order to make as many schedules as possible useable, individual letters were written to all respondents who returned the questionnaires incompletely or incorrectly filled in. These letters pointed out the deficiencies in the schedules as submitted, enclosed a mimeographed "Word of Explanation," and urged the associations to furnish the information called for. Excellent cooperation was received in this phase of work.
6. There were 9,360 local and 433 regional co-ops listed with FCS in 1954, at the time of our study. From this list questionnaires were mailed to 1,765 locals and 405 regionals. Replies were received from 1,172 locals and 317 regionals, but only 898 local schedules and 317 regional schedules were useable and included in our sample. The sample was picked at random and appears to be representative.
7. Sampling methods were discussed with department statisticians in AMS. At their suggestion, 105 schedules (17 regionals and 88 locals) from non-respondents in 4 States were taken by personal interview to make sure that the questionnaire data filed by mail were similar to those obtained by personal interview.
8. The co-ops listed with FCS but not included in our sample were arrayed in frequency tables by commodities handled and volume of business done to enable us to develop national estimates.

(Over)

9. Information has been tabulated for the following commodity groups:

I. Marketing

II. Service

III. Farm Supply

1. Cotton
2. Dairy
3. Fruits & Vegetables
4. Grain
5. Livestock
6. Miscellaneous
7. Nuts
8. Poultry
9. Dry Beans & Peas
10. Rice
11. Soybean Processing
12. Sugar
13. Tobacco
14. Wool

10. Information for above commodity groups is tabulated separately for locals and regionals. (No information from bargaining co-ops.)

11. Data for each commodity group is tabulated according to the following volume of business groups:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. \$100,000 or less | 13. \$6,000,000 - \$7,999,999 |
| 2-9. Each \$100,000 up to \$1,000,000 | 14. \$8,000,000 - \$9,999,999 |
| 10. \$1,000,000 - \$1,999,999 | 15. \$10,000,000 - \$24,999,999 |
| 11. \$2,000,000 - \$3,999,999 | 16. \$25,000,000 - \$49,999,999 |
| 12. \$4,000,000 - \$5,999,999 | 17. \$50,000,000 and over |

12. Total assets for each co-op in sample were obtained and tabulated along with other data.

13. No IBM cards were used in this study.

14. The scope and details of the study are evidenced by the attached schedule.



Session VI

Roundup Session

J. G. Knapp, *Chairman*

Roundup Session

In the final session the last afternoon, Ruth Nordin, Information Division, Soil Conservation Service, placed the samples for simplified writing used in the morning work groups on the Vu-Graph. She then showed visually how to simplify and clarify the involved, muddled writing by taking out the gobbledygook, getting one main idea to a sentence, avoiding passive voice, and using simpler words.

Forest Hall, Marketing Information Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, then reported on the second part of the morning's work groups both as consultant of one group and as the general reporter for all.

He said in part, "As was to be expected there was some difference of opinion about how material should be presented. Roughly, I would judge that a fourth or even less thought the report should start with considerable amount of background material so the reader would understand how material was collected.

"About three-fourths developed their outline on the basis somewhat closer to what I think is more effective and what is becoming in much wider usage these days. This gave a brief introduction first. Then it went into what I believe was best expressed by one man who wrote, 'Principal Problem in Financing Cooperatives' as his first main head.

Outline of Course Only Tentative

"When you try to make an outline from a questionnaire without having the answers to the questions, you are making only a tentative outline. The answers will, of course, then determine the final form of the outline.

"The question was raised in several groups as to whether there should be one long report, two reports, or a half dozen

reports. That is one argument we can't resolve until we have all the data together. Someone suggested two reports, one for regionals and one for locals. That might be proper. On the other hand, you could organize the report by starting out with a brief introduction and then taking a major problem of all co-ops.

"As expected, no definite outline came out of these sessions...But in closing, I'd like to repeat some of the remarks I made yesterday on organization. First, we need a big bang at the front of the story. I believe the entire writing world and the entire information world are moving so rapidly in this direction that we might as well give up and put the background material in the back of any book designed for fairly wide use."

Some Chairman Comments

Mr. Knapp then asked each chairman if he wanted to comment. Highlights of quotes from various people during this discussion followed:

John J. Scanlan, chairman of Group I. Our group had a lot of difference of opinion. One of the things we did was to try to tie the project statement in with the outline. We didn't rely entirely on the statistical schedule. Our outline did not give many first headings. And it probably followed the old form so we may have fallen into the first one-fourth group. We had trouble about where to put the bang -- in the summary or in the first part of the body of the report.

Forest Hall -- Highlights or summary should be one bang after another. After that your reader interest will continue in the body of the report if you put most useful, most practical, most interesting stuff first.

Joseph G. Knapp -- On this part I had an experience a good many years ago that may add to this point. I had written what I thought was a Jim Dandy article for the News for Farmer Cooperatives. In a short time the article came back from the information office -- not useable. I asked for an explanation from E. B. Reid, then head of that office. He said: "Well, I'll tell you what I think is wrong. Say, for example there was a fire in the Capitol. You would say, 'Well, we got out the fire truck, and went up Pennsylvania Avenue and so on.' You have ambled up to the fire. You must get the fire up front." I took page 7 and made it page 1. I learned an invaluable lesson from this.

Martin A. Abrahamsen, chairman of Group II -- We also had questions about the approach. We seemed to be dividing our attack along two lines. Should we start with problems or should we say these are farmer organizations, interested in money and interested in how revolving funds work?

We have one other suggestion on the readability problem. We wondered if it might be a little more helpful to have something from some of our work rather than the far-removed situations presented.

Beryle Stanton -- We considered drawing from our own work, but felt most of us wouldn't want our own writing held up as a horrible example. We, of course, might be able to work one out if we do this again.

Forest Hall -- I think it better to start with problems and way co-ops can solve them. Starting with explanations is an ineffective way of writing a report. Put useful, informative material up front. Don't omit methodology or background material if it's needed, but put it in the back. If you write exclusively for technicians, you can put methodology and background up front. Managers of co-ops are businessmen so we can put important information up front for them.

K. B. Gardner, Chairman of Group III -- We thought this morning's work quite productive. We tried to get the bang up front. These were good exercises and I am much in favor of them.

H. H. Hulbert, Chairman of Group VI -- Many good ideas came out -- even

though there were almost as many ideas as people in the room. I liked the idea of the number of publications that might come out of the study.

D. E. Hirsch, Chairman, Group IV -- Most of what has been said already covered our session. We did have one different idea -- that because of the amount of data collected we could get useful information to managers and leaders in two publications, one of them largely statistical that the average manager probably wouldn't want to wade through, and another on problems.

Ira M. Stevens, Chairman, Group V -- We ran into most of the same problems. We came out in our outline with the bang in the introduction. We recognized that probably the first part of the report would be rather general, leaving details either to the latter part of this publication or to future publications. We felt we could have done a better job on the outline if we had had two or three times as much time.

First Agency-Wide Workshop

After a brief intermission, J. M. McCormick, Assistant Director, Office of Information, USDA, remarked that the Office of Information was glad to participate in the workshop and that they can get great dividends out of it. He went on, "We are learning the workshop principle. In 1952 we held a partnership planning workshop that brought together all information people, editors, and illustrators from the Department, people from the Government Printing Office, and other people with the common meeting ground of improving department publications.

"You have gone fairly far in this workshop, the first agency-wide one in the department. AMS did hold a similar workshop last year for one of its divisions. I was struck by one thing, the FCS workshop has run very smoothly and covered a terrific amount of material."

Some of the general discussion that then followed covered these points:

H. J. Preston commented "'read' and 'used' have been used interchangeably here. 'I don't believe this is necessarily the case.'"

In response to a discussion on type of material for different audiences, Mrs. Stanton mentioned that often two publications were the answer, the more popular one saying that if you want more details, write for the longer report.

Mr. Knapp commented on the difference between popularizing and simplifying, that to cut to an 8th grade audience is one thing, to simplify is another. He stated there was no question that material should be as simply expressed as possible and that certainly material for a wide audience should be popularized.

Mr. Scanlan raised the question of how far we should go in trying to perfect a manuscript, how much should the branch chief edit before passing on to the division director.

Mr. Knapp replied that that depended somewhat on the job. If the job was good little change would be necessary. If poor he should help the author improve the manuscript.

Finished Inspection Vital

He then went on to say that the finished inspection process can give the most value and that the final thing to look for is the way the publication hits the market.

Going back to Mr. Scanlan's question on perfecting a manuscript, Mr. Randell said he felt the author should work with and hang on to a manuscript long enough to be sure that he gets down the factual material, clarifying and working in the fine interpretations and meanings. He wouldn't agree that we needed to go as far as those writing for Bismarck -- by the time a report had gone through a half dozen specialists and reached Bismarck every word was a jewel. But he did feel we shouldn't turn a manuscript loose until we have our own brand on it.

K. B. Gardner asked what criteria USDA uses to base conclusions that its more popularized publications are actually obtaining greater readership and effectiveness when applied to so-called research publications.

In reply, Mr. Mileham made these points -- "We are writing for more than

one audience, which has quite a bearing on what you are trying to do when writing any publications. Don't underestimate intelligence of people you write for but don't overestimate their reading or literary ability.

He said, "We do have forthcoming an appropriation of \$18,000 to evaluate USDA publications. This is the first time the Department has had that. The Department is one of the greatest scientific organizations in the whole world but has not done much in scientific study of our communications. Here at least we can make a little start -- hire a man able to do some such research, and get him a secretary and some supplies."

Place of News for Farmer Cooperatives

H. H. Hulbert mentioned that several of the college and extension letters had been complimentary to the News for Farmer Cooperatives. He asked about the possibility of expanding the circulation to go to more managers, directors and key people in cooperatives in view of the situation that letters indicate it a good medium for getting ideas across.

Mrs. Stanton stated the News had a ceiling of 17,000 authorized by the Bureau of the Budget, and the possibilities for increasing this were discussed.

Mr. Knapp here mentioned that we have a whole family of publications, that we use the News in a particular way and that other types of reports do a different job. He suggested FCS needed to have two kinds of reports, one distinguished when we wish to reach a professional audience, the other popular, when we want to get our ideas to a larger audience.

Mr. Mather suggested we might not know too much about what local managers really wanted to read and could use, citing the fact that there are about 9,500 managers and directors of local cooperatives. Someone else mentioned a figure of 400 regional co-ops.

Mr. Mann raised the question of how to get more FCS information on to farmers, suggesting radio and the like to call their attention to our publications. Mrs. Stanton mentioned FCS had been using television packages some to do this.



Beryle Stanton, editor of the News for Farmer Cooperatives, looks at a display of the magazine. Mr. Knapp pointed out that the News as one member of the FCS family of publications has a special job to do.

Mr. Knapp in his closing remarks said, "We didn't come here with the idea that we knew all the answers or could find them all in a short 3 days. This is just a pepper-upper; it should be a

stimulator to good work rather than the end result."

Mrs. Stanton then passed out a kit of materials on writing better reports and closed the workshop with thanks to all.

